NINTENDO POWER

New Super Mario Bros. Wii • Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing • Infinite Space No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle Red Steel 2 • Phantasy Star Ø

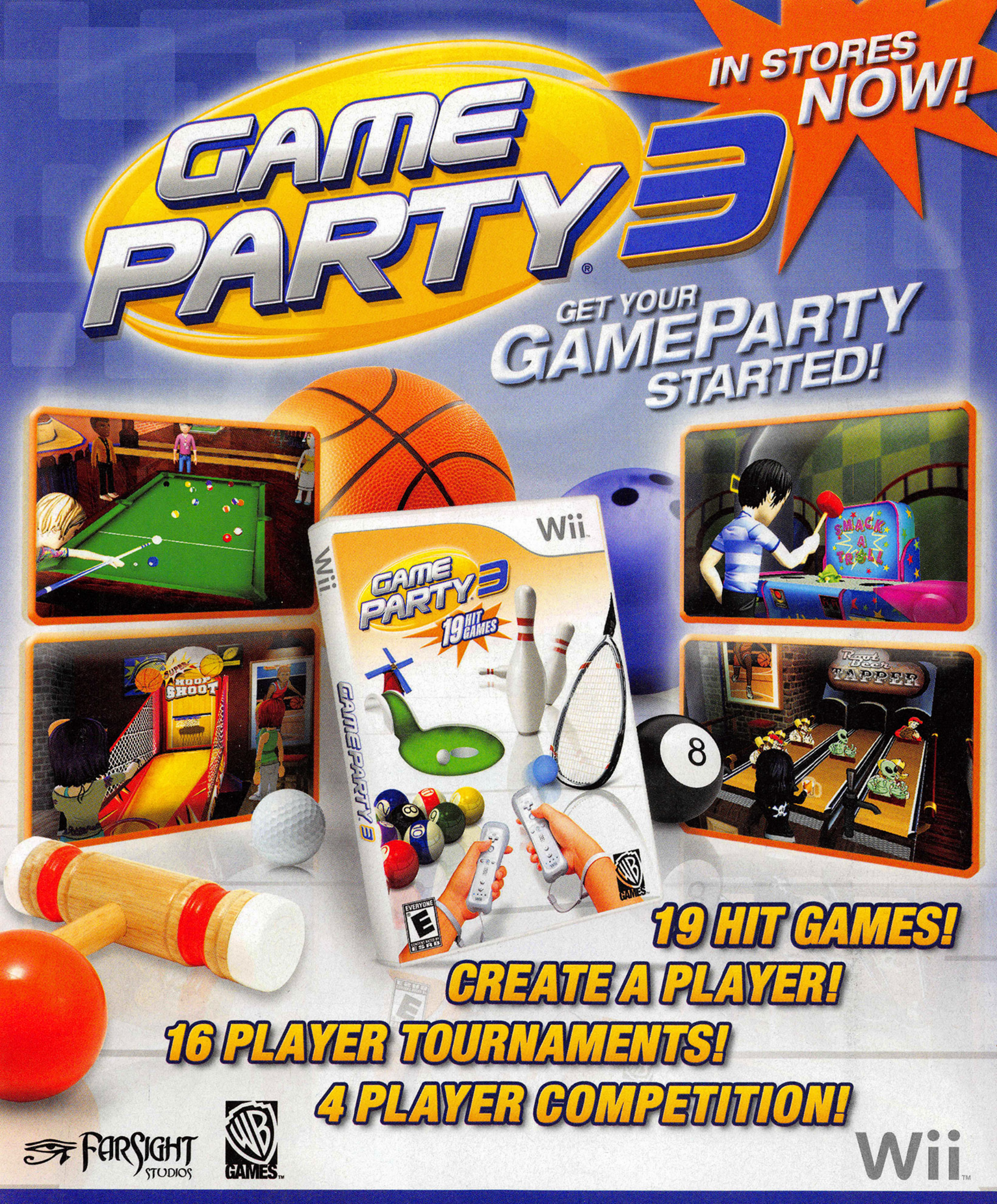
248 DECEMBER 2009
SUBSCRIBER EDITION

IN STORES NOW!
TOUCHMASTER® 3
Once You Start, You Can't Stop!
NINTENDO DS™
Master 20 new games!
TOUCHMASTER® 3
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
WB GAMES
20 BRAND NEW GAMES!
COMPETE WITH A FRIEND!
ADDICTIVE FUN!
Hijinx STUDIOS
WB GAMES
NINTENDO DS

EVERYONE
E
Mild Cartoon Violence
Mild Language
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

TOUCHMASTER 3 software © 2009 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Developed by Hijinx Studios, LLC. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2004 Nintendo. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks and copyrights are the property of their respective owners.

TOUCHMASTER and all related characters and elements are trademarks of and © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
WB GAMES LOGO, WB SHIELD: ™ & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
(s09)


IN STORES NOW!
GAME PARTY® 3
GET YOUR GAMEPARTY STARTED!
Wii
GAME PARTY 3
19 HIT GAMES
SMACK A TROLL
SUPER HOOP SHOOT
Root Beer TAPPER
19 HIT GAMES!
CREATE A PLAYER!
16 PLAYER TOURNAMENTS!
4 PLAYER COMPETITION!
FARSIGHT STUDIOS
WB GAMES
Wii™

EVERYONE
E
Violent References
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

Game Party 3 software © 2009 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Developed by Farsight Studios. Music © Associated Production Music LLC. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. All other trademarks and copyrights are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

GAME PARTY and all related characters and elements are trademarks of and © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
WB GAMES LOGO, WB SHIELD: ™ & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
(s09)

CONTENTS

DECEMBER 2009

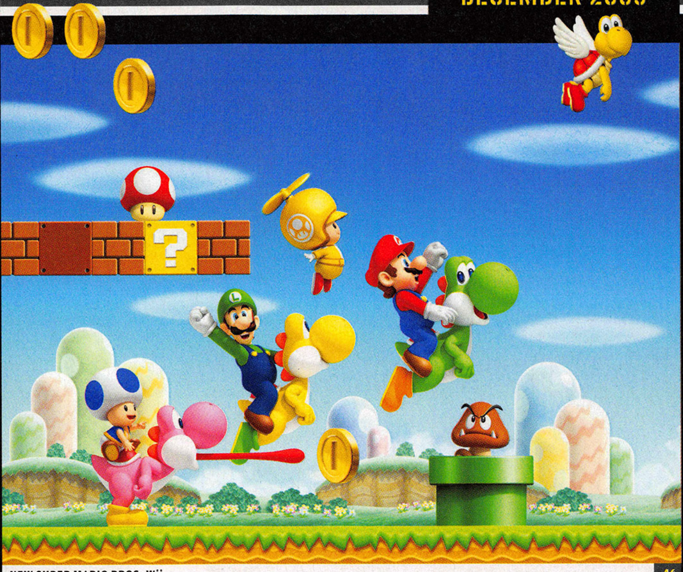
FEATURES

Here-A-We Go! 46
New Super Mario Bros. Wii is almost here! Find out everything you need to know about the worlds, the powers, the bosses, and some of the craziest multiplayer ever.

Sega on the Fast Track 58
You've seen Sega racing games before, but never quite like this. Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing brings the hedgehog and a host of other Sega heroes into one of the wildest kart racers on Wii.

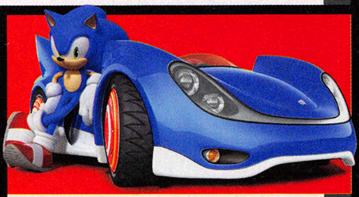
Deep Space 62
Admit it—you've always wanted to command your own spaceship. Now you can in Infinite Space for DS. Warp speed ahead!

Ultimate Zelda 68
Which Zelda game is best? What about the best boss? Best weapon? The answer was a secret to everybody—until now! Get NP's picks for the highlights of the series in this celebration of all things Zelda.

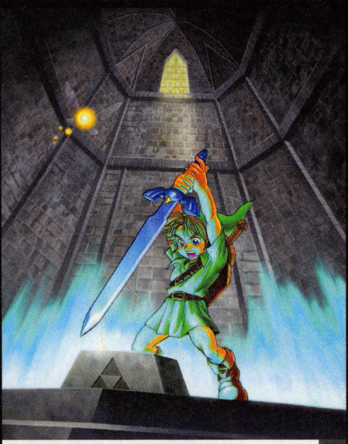


NEW SUPER MARIO BROS. Wii 46

INFINITE SPACE 62



SONIC & SEGA ALL-STARS RACING 58



ULTIMATE ZELDA 68

nintendo Wi-Fi connection
SHONEN JUMP
NARUTO SHIPPUDEN
Clash of Ninja III
REVOLUTION
THE BEST FIGHTER ON Wii IS BACK!
Available November 17
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
NINJA ACADEMY
Join Now at Naruto.Tomy-USA.com
SHONEN JUMP
VIZ media
Wii™
TOMY®

35+ characters from the Shippuden storyline and more!

New and improved gameplay mechanics for 2009!

1-4 multiplayer PLUS NEW WiFi multiplayer battles

Cartoon Violence
Mild Suggestive Themes

Online Interactions Not Rated by the ESRB

Tomy-usa.com/videogames

© 2002 MASASHI KISHIMOTO / 2007 SHIPPUDEN All Rights Reserved. SHONEN JUMP, NARUTO, and CLASH OF NINJA are trademarks of Shueisha, Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. This product is manufactured, distributed and sold under license from VIZ Media, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Game and Software © 2008-2009 TOMY. All Rights Reserved. TOMY and its logo are trademarks of TOMY. VIZ Media and its logo are trademarks of VIZ Media, LLC. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2004 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

NINTENDO POWER

CONTENTS

DECEMBER 2009

DEPARTMENTS

Pulse 6

News 10

Download 18

Previews 32
- Assassin's Creed II: Discovery 40
- Dawn of Heroes 40
- F1 2009 43
- Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers 32
- Jambo! Safari 43
- No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle 34
- Red Steel 2 37
- Shiren the Wanderer 38
- Sin and Punishment 2 36
- Super Monkey Ball: Step & Roll 42

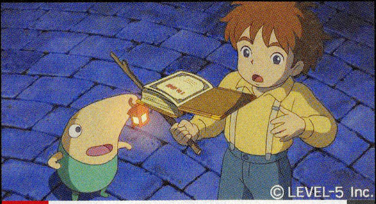
Power Profiles 76

Playback 80

Reviews 81
- Academy of Champions: Soccer 86
- Astro Boy: The Video Game 83
- Atelier Annie: Alchemists of Sera Island 85
- Cooking Mama 3: Shop & Chop 87
- Dance Dance Revolution: Hottest Party 3 84
- Dragon Ball: Revenge of King Piccolo 88
- Dragon Ball Z: Attack of the Saiyans 87
- Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter (DS) 88
- Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter (Wii) 83
- FIFA Soccer 10 84
- Fighting Fantasy: The Warlock of Firetop Mountain 89
- Harvest Moon: Animal Parade 87
- Harvest Moon: Sunshine Islands 85
- Karaoke Revolution 86
- Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2 89
- Nostalgia 86
- Phantasy Star Ø 82
- Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky 84
- SimAnimals Africa 84
- Space Invaders Extreme 2 88
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Arcade Attack 89
- WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010 (DS) 86
- WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010 (Wii) 85

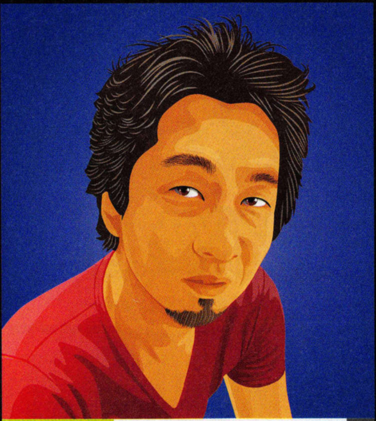
Community 92

Next Month 96



NEWS TOKYO GAME SHOW 2009 10

PREVIEW FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES: THE CRYSTAL BEARERS 32



POWER PROFILES AKIRA YAMAOKA 76

REVIEW PHANTASY STAR Ø 82

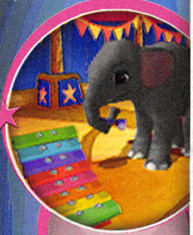
GAME INDEX

3-2-1, Rattle Battle! (WW)	28
Academy of Champions: Soccer (Wii)	86
Art Academy: First Semester (DW)	30
Assassin's Creed II: Discovery (DS)	40
Astro Boy: The Video Game (Wii)	83
Atelier Annie: Alchemists of Sera Island (DS)	85
Clubhouse Games Express: Family Favorites (DW)	30
Clubhouse Games Express: Strategy Pack (DW)	30
ColorZ (WW)	28
Contra ReBirth (WW)	28
Cooking Mama 3: Shop & Chop (DS)	87
Crash 'n the Boys: Street Challenge (VC)	30
Dance Dance Revolution: Hottest Party 3 (Wii)	84
Dawn of Heroes (DS)	40
Dragon Ball: Revenge of King Piccolo (Wii)	88
Dragon Ball Z: Attack of the Saiyans (DS)	87
Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Reverie (DS)	10
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter (DS)	88
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter (Wii)	83
F1 2009 (Wii)	43
Family Tennis (WW)	28
FIFA Soccer 10 (Wii)	84
Fighting Fantasy: The Warlock of Firetop Mountain (DS)	89
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers (Wii)	32
Final Fantasy Gaiden: Four Warriors of Light (DS)	11
Foto Fighter (DS)	14
Ghost Trick (DS)	10
Harvest Moon: Animal Parade (Wii)	87
Harvest Moon: Sunshine Islands (DS)	85
Infinite Space (DS)	62
Jambo! Safari (Wii)	43
Karaoke Revolution (Wii)	86
Last Ninja 2 (VC)	30
The Legend of Zelda (series)	68
Liight (WW)	22
LostWinds: Winter of the Melodias (WW)	18
Mart Racer (WW)	28
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2 (Wii)	89
Monster Hunter Tri (Wii)	11
New Super Mario Bros. Wii (Wii)	46
Ninokuni: The Another World (DS)	10
No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle (Wii)	34
Nostalgia (DS)	86
Okamiden (DS)	10
Oscar in Toyland (DW)	30
Phantasy Star (VC)	29
Phantasy Star Ø (DS)	82
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky (DS)	84
Pokémon Platinum Version (DS)	12
Puzzle League Express (DW)	30
Red Steel 2 (Wii)	37
Sengoku Basara Samurai Heroes (Wii)	10
Shantae: Risky's Revenge (DW)	24
Shiren the Wanderer (Wii)	38
SimAnimals Africa (Wii)	84
Sin and Punishment 2 (Wii)	36
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing (Wii)	58
Space Invaders Extreme 2 (DS)	88
Spaceball: Revolution (WW)	28
Street Fighter Alpha 2 (SNES)	80
Super Meat Boy (WW)	22
Super Monkey Ball: Step & Roll (Wii)	42
Super Return of the Jedi (VC)	30
Tales of Graces (Wii)	11
Tales of Monkey Island Chapter 2: The Siege of Spinner Cay (WW)	28
Tales of Monkey Island Chapter 4: The Trial and Execution of Guybrush Threepwood (WW)	20
Tales of Monkey Island Chapter 5: Rise of the Pirate God (WW)	20
Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars (Wii)	11
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Arcade Attack (DS)	89
Texas Hold'em Poker (WW)	29
Tsumuji (DS)	11
Wii Sports Resort (Wii)	14
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010 (DS)	86
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010 (Wii)	85
You, Me, and the Cubes (WW)	29

DS = NINTENDO DS
DW = DSiWare
SNES = SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
VC = VIRTUAL CONSOLE
Wii = Wii
WW = WiiWare

NEWS 🟥
DOWNLOAD 🟦
PREVIEW ⬛
FEATURE ▨
PLAYBACK 🟧
REVIEW 🟦

CIRCUS FRIENDS FOREVER

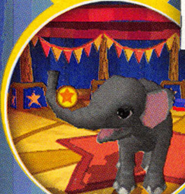


Get musical with the xylophone challenge

NTR-BRLE-USA
NINTENDO DS™
RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY
THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH
CIRCUS FRIENDS
ASIAN ELEPHANTS
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
2K PLAY

Dress up your pachyderm pal in a variety of wacky and wonderful outfits

Play and practice activities like painting, plate spinning and even juggling



Help your elephant show off for the Big-Top performance

Keep your friend clean with bubbly baths

Game and system sold separately.

Care for your very own *Ringling Bros.*™ Elephant on Nintendo DS™!

Not everyone can say they are Circus Friends with an Asian Elephant. But you can! Care for your playful pachyderm by making sure it eats well, stays clean and healthy, and gets daily exercise. Hone your training skills to help your friend star in *The Greatest Show On Earth*™!

www.2kgames.com/2kplay

EVERYONE
E
Comic Mischief
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

NINTENDO DS™

RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

CAT DADDY games

2K PLAY

©2009 Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. Circus Friends: Asian Elephants, 2K Play, the 2K Play logo, Cat Daddy Games, and the Cat Daddy Games logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. ©Feld Entertainment, Inc. RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY and THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH, are trademarks of and are under license from Ringling Bros.-Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows, Inc. All rights reserved. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. ©2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

Pulse

Four Controllers and One Couch

Chris Slate

Despite the fact that I can now play games online with anyone in the country or abroad, playing New Super Mario Bros. Wii this month reminded me that multiplayer games are best enjoyed while sitting beside friends. Online gaming is great—some kinds of multiplayer experiences just can't be done with four controllers and one TV—but there's something missing when you can't work out team strategies in person or see the other player's reaction when you bop him with a Koopa shell. My favorite multiplayer memories are all of offline experiences—from Final Fight to Street Fighter II to GoldenEye 007 to Mario Kart to Super Smash. Bros.—and I'm happy to say that the frenzied four-player action in New Super Mario Bros. Wii ranks up there with the best. You laugh, work together, and thoroughly get in each other's way. Just remember to share the power-ups!

CHRIS SLATE **EDITOR IN CHIEF**

Wii

Resident Evil secrets revealed

NINTENDO POWER

Wii & Nintendo DS TAKE OFF with the season's top games!

WA-HOO!

BIGGEST REVIEWS SECTION EVER!

Your wish is GRANTED!

Shantae finally returns in an all-new platformer. Six pages of EXCLUSIVE pics!

V247 NOVEMBER 2009

Chris Slate here, back once again to answer your letters while belly-sliding through Goombas in my Penguin Suit. But first, this month's special letter request: what's the craziest thing you've seen happen in a multiplayer game? Send your responses to the address on page 8, and we'll print the best ones!

LETTERS

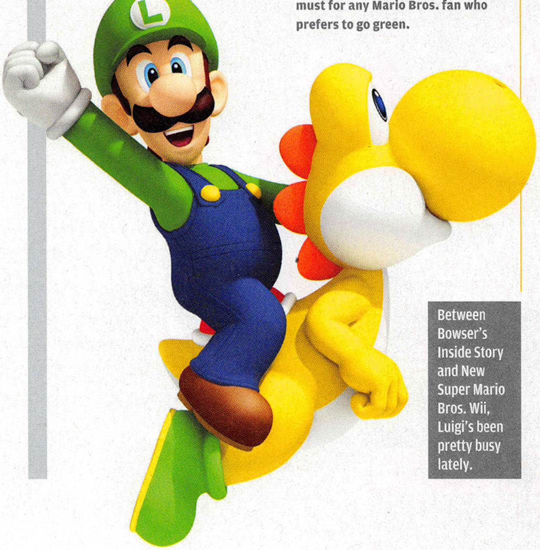
LUIGI LOVE

I think that Nintendo and Nintendo Power have been ignoring Luigi. He has saved Mario multiple times (such as in Luigi's Mansion), yet he's still in his brother's shadow. Games that have Mario are awesome, but I just think that Luigi should get his own game that isn't at all related to his brother; maybe then he would make more of a name for himself and get some of Mario's fame. **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

Why does Luigi get picked on? He's always shown as a scared, inferior Mario clone. Something needs to be done. **—ADAM U.**

I'd like to see a New Play Control version of Luigi's Mansion for Wii. It would be great to see this underrated gem get a second look, if for no other reason than it stars Luigi alone...and rescuing Mario, no less! **—KELLEN M.**

We're all for another Luigi solo adventure, but in the meantime, you can look forward to seeing him in New Super Mario Bros. Wii. And the excellent Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story is a must for any Mario Bros. fan who prefers to go green.



Between Bowser's Inside Story and New Super Mario Bros. Wii, Luigi's been pretty busy lately.

Even though I've never played the first Shantae (I hadn't even heard of the game before it popped up in the Playback section a couple of months ago), I was blown away by your preview of the new sequel. *That's* DSiWare? It looks as good as any full game! If the graphics really are that good, I suppose it's finally time for me to go out and get a Nintendo DSi. —**MIKE W.**

DOWNLOAD

Your Wish Is Granted

WayForward's spunky little half-genie hero, Shantae, gets her long-overdue sequel on DSiWare.

There were no losers in the "16-bit war" of the '90s; just great games and classic consoles for anyone on either side of the fence.

HEALING OLD WOUNDS

Your article on the anniversary of the Sega Genesis was a class act; you guys have made me a reader for life by spotlighting one of the greatest consoles of all time. I still collect Genesis games—I have about 100 at this point—and in my opinion, the Genesis-versus-Super NES era was the golden age of gaming. I just wanted to say thank you, and to ask that you please include more retro articles like this because it helps newer players understand gaming's past. —**TOM B.**

As a gamer that grew up in the Super NES era, I was surprised to see Nintendo's old foe, the Sega Genesis, honored in Vol. 246—and I couldn't have been happier! I never truly understood the 16-bit feud back then; all it did was divide people and cause them to miss out on some amazing games simply because they were on a competing console. I hope this shows everyone that still argues over which system was better that the "console war" is over, and that they should just agree that both systems were great. —**16-BIT WIN.**

We couldn't have put it better, and to be honest, putting a picture of the Genesis in the magazine gave us a special thrill. Who'd have thought, right?

NO MORE "HEROES?"

I was super excited when I saw No More Heroes 2 on the Next Month page in Vol. 245, and I couldn't wait to see it on the next issue's cover. But then you guys were like, "Ha, ha—just kidding!" So I patiently waited for another issue to roll around, but it still didn't have any news. What's the holdup, guys? —**HAILEY B.**

Sorry; our initial plans fell through (although NMH2 was never going to be the cover), but we've finally got a new preview for you in this very issue!

KEEP QUIET!

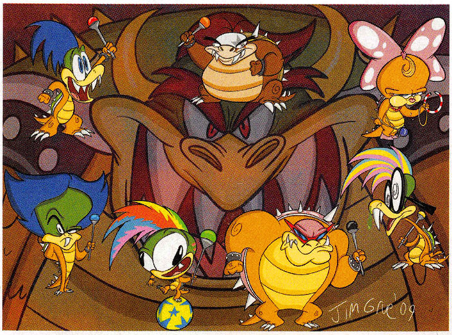
At first, Metroid: Other M looked ridiculously badass. However, my excitement drained away when I heard Samus say, "I am Samus Aran." Samus, the silent heroine, should not talk!

—**(NO NAME GIVEN)**

Ah, yes, the old "should Nintendo characters talk" debate. Other M will focus more on story, so maybe the vocals will be a good match. I say we give it a chance. Besides, are *you* going to tell Samus to keep her mouth shut?

KOOPA KRAZY

I heard that the Koopalings are supposed to come back in New Super Mario Bros. Wii, so I wanted to show some love for the little guys. I can't wait to see them again! —**JAMES**

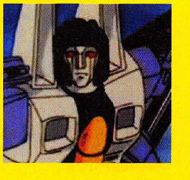


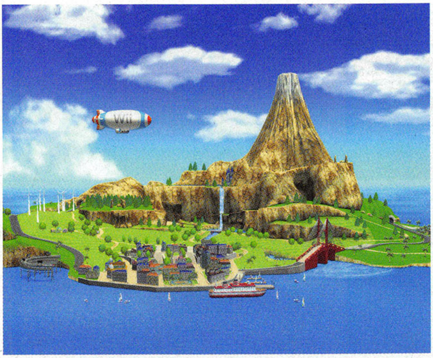
How awesome is this Koopa family portrait? Great work, James!

DON'T HASSLE THE HOFF

Your review of Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen is a disgrace! "Putrid comedy bits?" I can't believe you! And saying that a 5.5 game is still better than the movie?! Before you mangle another Transformers game like that again, you need someone who has had a Transformers obsession since the age of three and has 178 action figures! —**UNICRON**

The Hoff says: First, I apologize for saying the movie had "putrid comedy bits." I meant to say they were "wretched" and "vomit-inducing." Second, it sounds like someone here is challenging our Transformers street cred. For your information, the following is a photo of Steve Thomason before his plastic surgery:





I find the island in Wii Sports Resort very compelling. With so many unique locations and a user-friendly atmosphere, you won't be able to put down your Wii Remote because of how blown your mind is! —(NO NAME GIVEN)

WHICH GAME WORLD DO YOU FIND THE MOST COMPELLING?

The Metroid series has my favorite sci-fi game world, hands down. It's treated with great consistency throughout all the games, with enough detail to make even the smallest things interesting, completely independent of the plot. **—ALT**

The alternate-reality Shibuya in The World Ends with You is undeniably the best fantasy world ever seen in a video game. It's a great re-creation of the busy Tokyo district, with very diverse people, shops, and locations. I rarely get emotional when playing video games, but the story in this one is so incredible that when I reached the ending, I'm not at all ashamed to admit that I actually cried. **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

For me, Twilight Princess has the most compelling game world; it's just so complex and unique. Everywhere you go there is something different, from the lush landscape of Hyrule Field to the flowing waters of Zora's domain, not to mention the city in the sky. I mean, *hello*? A city full of Ooccas? That's pretty cool! And the detailed graphics make the world that much more compelling. I discover something new every time I play. Animal Crossing: City Folk is a pretty close runner-up; that world is pretty darn adorable! **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

I would love to visit the world of Final Fantasy to ride chocobos, interact with moogles, and fly an airship. **—DAN G.**

There are a number of excellent sci-fi universes in gaming, but one of my favorites has always been the one in StarCraft. The intricate backstory, the human society of the future, and the results of first contact between humans and aliens have always felt exceptionally believable to me. **—GATOTSU911**

Chibi-Robo had a great world to explore with a lot of awesome characters, like the aliens. There was also a great soundtrack and lots to do! **—BONYY13**

The epic worlds of the Tales of Symphonia games are filled with humor, cool monsters, and exceptionally cool landscapes. For the most compelling sci-fi world, I would pick Phantasy Star Online with its amazing weapons, battle system, and roster of monsters that not even Metroid can compete with. **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

The world of Weyard in the Golden Sun series is by far one of the most interesting, compelling, and imaginative places I have seen in my gaming life. Let me list a couple of amazing things this world has: creatures that control elements called Djinni, talking werewolves, Poseidon the mythological sea king, a cursed pirate by the name of Deadbeard, a giant floating rock with an eye, dragons, and a power known as alchemy. That's not even the half of it, but it's already enough for the Golden Sun games to achieve a status of epicness! **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

I am partial to the sci-fi/fantasy world of the Baten Kaitos series, which hosts pristine wilderness locales as well as futuristic cityscapes. The blend of rural and urban environments creates an amazingly deep setting that contains something for everybody. **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

What, nobody picked the Mushroom Kingdom? Well, I suppose that rescuing Peach and talking to Toads *would* get old after a while....

PLEASE WRITE US

pulse@nintendopower.com

OR VIA CARRIER PIGEON AT

Nintendo Power/Pulse
c/o Future US
4000 Shoreline Court, Ste. 400
South San Francisco, CA 94080

TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR LETTER PUBLISHED:

Understand that the magazine staff is separate from Nintendo; we don't make the games.

Don't send links to game coverage on the Web—trust us; we see it all.

Don't ask about the status of upcoming games, or whether certain games will be announced; if we have that info, we'll always tell you.

NINTENDO POWER

KOOPA KIDS

EDITOR IN CHIEF **Chris Slate**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR **Steve Thomason**
SENIOR EDITOR **Chris Hoffman**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR **Justin Cheng**
ART DIRECTOR **Chris Imlay**
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS **Carolyn Gudmundson, Andrew Hayward, Casey Loe, Nathan Meunier, Chris Shepperd, George Sinfield, David F. Smith, Phil Theobald**
COPY EDITOR **Candace Cunningham**
LICENSING MANAGER **Frances Wall Jha**
EDITOR AT LARGE **Scott Pelland**

BUSINESS
GROUP PUBLISHER **Kelley Corten - 650.745.9225**
GENERAL MANAGER, GAMES ADVERTISING GROUP **Rachelle Considine - rconsidine@futureus.com - 650.238.2505**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INTEGRATED SALES **Nate Hunt - nhunt@futureus.com - 415.269.5408**
REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR **Isaac Ugay - iugay@futureus.com - 949.305.0767**
REGIONAL SALES MANAGER **Rachel Campos - rcampos@futureus.com - 650.745.9207**
ACCOUNT MANAGER **Arthur St. Germain - astgermain@futureus.com - 650.238.2571**
INTEGRATED SALES DIRECTOR **Joe Pomparelli - jpomparelli@futureus.com - 323.342.1888**
INTEGRATED SALES MANAGER **David Wells - dwells@futureus.com - 646.723.5493**
DETROIT CONSUMER MANAGER **Alan Dickinson - alandmedia@comcast.net - 248.792.2408**
ADVERTISING COORDINATOR **Heidi Hapin - hhapin@futureus.com**
MARKETING MANAGER **Andrea Recio-Ang - arecio-ang@futureus.com**

PRODUCTION
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR **Richie Lesovoy**
SENIOR PRODUCTION COORDINATOR **Larry Briseno**
PRINT ORDER COORDINATOR **Jennifer Lim**

CONSUMER MARKETING
DIRECTOR CONSUMER MARKETING **Rich McCarthy**
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR **Crystal Hudson**
NEWSSTAND DIRECTOR **Bill Shewey**
CONSUMER MARKETING OPERATIONS DIRECTOR **Lisa Radler**
RENEWAL & BILLING MANAGER **Mike Hill**
BUSINESS MANAGER **Elliot Kiger**
SR. ONLINE CONSUMER MARKETING MANAGER **Jennifer Trinkner**
CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER **Mike Frassica**

FUTURE US, Inc.
4000 Shoreline Court,
Suite 400, South San
Francisco, CA 94080
www.futureus.com

VP/CFO **John Sutton**
VP/PUBLISHING DIRECTOR **Stacey Levy**
VP INTERNET DEVELOPMENT **Tyson Daugherty**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR GAMES **Stephen Pierce**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR MUSIC **Brad Tolinski**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR TECHNOLOGY & LIVING **Jon Phillips**
GENERAL COUNSEL **Charlotte Falla**
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR **Nancy DuBois**

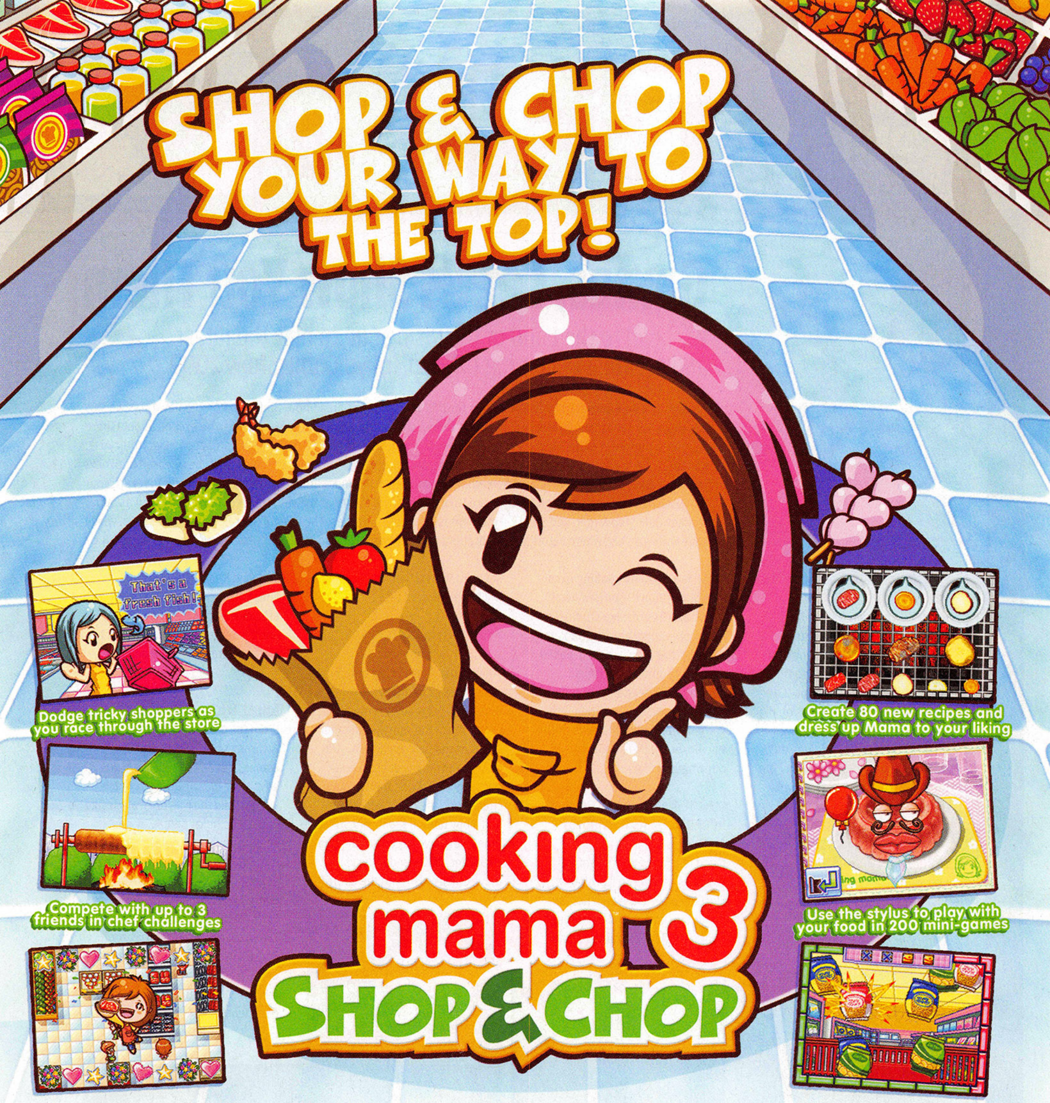
FUTURE PLC
30 Monmouth St., Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW, England
www.futureplc.com
Tel +44 1225 442244
www.futureplc.com

NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN: Roger Parry
CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Stevie Spring
GROUP FINANCE DIRECTOR: John Bowman

Nintendo Power Customer Care
P.O. Box 5770
Harlan, IA 51593-1270
1-866-941-8368
For Subscription Problems Only!
nintendopower@cdsfulfillment.com.
http://service.futureus-inc.com/
REPRINTS: For reprints, contact Reprint Management Services, 717.399.1900 ext. 100

Game trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners. TM, ®, the Nintendo DS logo and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2009 Nintendo.

ISSN: 1041-9551


SHOP & CHOP YOUR WAY TO THE TOP!
That's a fresh fish!
Dodge tricky shoppers as you race through the store
Compete with up to 3 friends in chef challenges
Create 80 new recipes and dress up Mama to your liking
Use the stylus to play with your food in 200 mini-games
cooking mama 3
SHOP & CHOP

Now you can buy, cook and serve up mouth-watering meals to your hungry friends, or mix and match ingredients to create your own unique recipes. Dig into this addictive culinary adventure!

Play the Demo In Store Now

EVERYONE
E
Alcohol Reference
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

NINTENDO DS™

WWW.COOKINGMAMA.COM

cooking mama ltd.

MAJESCO™ ENTERTAINMENT

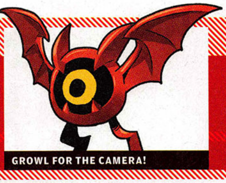
"Cooking Mama" is a trademark of Cooking Mama Ltd. "Cooking Mama 3: SHOP & CHOP" ©2006, 2009 Cooking Mama Ltd. All rights reserved. Published and distributed by Majesco Entertainment. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

News

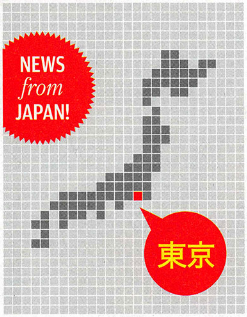
ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PLAY

PRICE DROP!

NEW BUNDLE!



GROWL FOR THE CAMERA!



Games, Let Us Show You Them

We head to the Land of the Rising Sun to play the latest and greatest upcoming titles at Tokyo Game Show 2009.

"Game, it's so energetic!" was the slogan for this year's Tokyo Game Show, and based on the new titles we saw and played at the Makuhari Messe convention center, we have to agree that there's a lot to be excited about. There were long lines to see the latest gaming goodness from the major third-party publishers (Capcom, Electronic Arts, Konami, Namco Bandai, Sega, Square Enix, Ubisoft, and more). Yes, most of these titles won't be released until next year, and many of them have not yet been confirmed for a North American release at all, but don't let that curb your enthusiasm. In no particular order, here are 10 of our favorite games at the show (not counting titles such as Super Monkey Ball: Step & Roll, Red Steel 2, Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers, or Infinite Space, which have write-ups elsewhere in this fine publication) that have us feeling so, well, *energetic* about gaming. **—JUSTIN C.**

Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Reverie **NINTENDO DS**

It feels like ages since we first announced that Dragon Quest VI was coming to the Nintendo DS system (way back in Volume 230), but we finally got our hands on the Japanese version of the game. The turn-based formula remains the same as in previous iterations, but this time you travel between two different worlds.

Ninokuni: The Another World **NINTENDO DS**

Just as Level-5 is known for making excellent games (the Professor Layton series), Studio Ghibli is known for making excellent films (*Ponyo*, *Spirited Away*). These two impressive studios have come together for Ninokuni: The Another World, a turn-based RPG with some of the most beautiful cut-scenes ever put onto a DS card. We have no idea if the game is headed to this side of the Pacific, but we're keeping all of our fingers crossed.

Sengoku Basara Samurai Heroes **Wii**

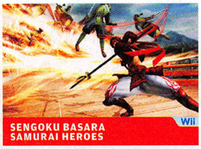
If you're a fan of Koei's Samurai Warriors series, you'll probably like Capcom's take—as in Koei's game, you hack and slash through hundreds of foes in feudal Japan. Sengoku Basara Samurai Heroes will hit the US next year.

Okamiden **NINTENDO DS**

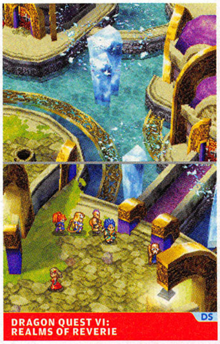
The longest lines at Capcom's booth were for this handheld sequel to Okami. The gameplay remains pretty much the same—using the stylus as the Celestial Brush, you can repair bridges or slash enemies—though there are two main characters: the wolf Chibiterasu and a boy named Kuninushi. At times, you have to control the two characters independently; you move Chibiterasu with the Control Pad, and Kuninushi walks via lines you draw with the stylus. No official word yet on a US release, but it's a sure bet that we'll hear an announcement at some point.

Ghost Trick **NINTENDO DS**

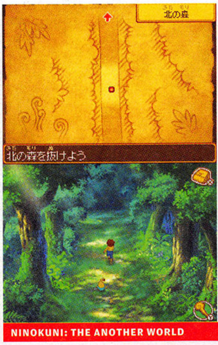
From the creator of the Ace Attorney series, Shu Takumi, comes Capcom's Ghost Trick, an adventure-puzzle game in which you assume the role of an amnesiac ghost who helps people by possessing inanimate objects. Say, for example, an assassin has a woman at gunpoint. You can possess a nearby guitar and strum the strings to distract the hitman, allowing the woman to make a break for it. There's more to the game than that, of course; we'll have more details as the 2010 North American release date nears.

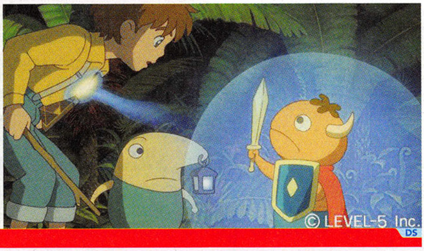


SENGOKU BASARA SAMURAI HEROES

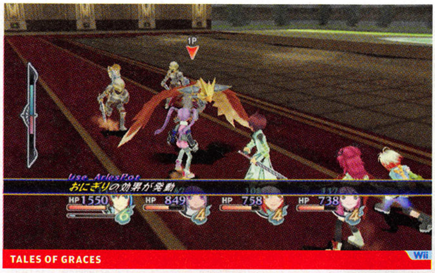


DRAGON QUEST VI: REALMS OF REVERIE

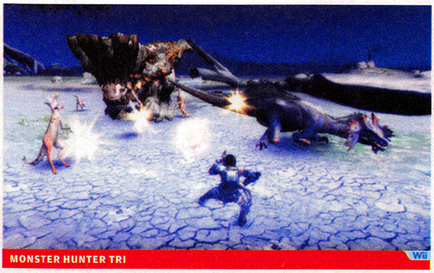




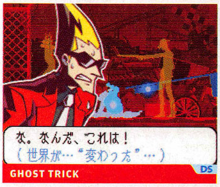
NINOKUNI: THE ANOTHER WORLD



TALES OF GRACES Wii



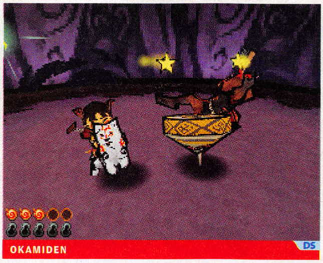
MONSTER HUNTER TRI Wii



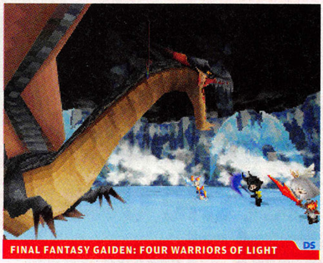
GHOST TRICK DS

Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars Wii

The newest addition to Capcom's fighting-game library is photojournalist/zombie-killer Frank West. Those who have played Dead Rising know that Frank is not one to be messed with; he's a master of using household objects—baseball bats, golf clubs, shopping carts—as weapons. Not to mention the fact that in Tatsunoko vs. Capcom he can summon zombies to aid him and don a Mega Man outfit (complete with a fully functional Mega Buster!).



OKAMIDEN DS



FINAL FANTASY GAIDEN: FOUR WARRIORS OF LIGHT DS

Tsumuji NINTENDO DS

This action-adventure title from Electronic Arts clearly draws inspiration from the handheld Legend of Zelda titles (Phantom Hourglass in particular). However, since Tsumuji features a ninja as its protagonist, there will be times when you'll have be stealthy. At press time, EA has mentioned only a Japanese release date.

Tales of Graces Wii

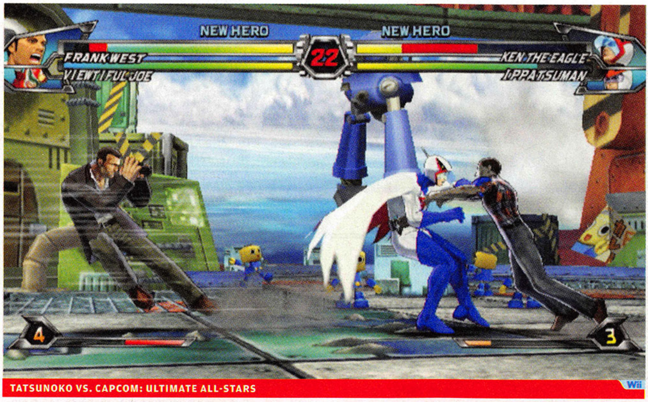
Namco Bandai hasn't said anything about a North American release of this latest Tales RPG, but we hope it makes it stateside. Tales of Graces retains the same basic feel of prior titles in the series, such as Tales of Symphonia for GameCube, but it has all-new characters and a brand-new story, as well as a different battle system.

Final Fantasy Gaiden: Four Warriors of Light NINTENDO DS

Final Fantasy Gaiden: Four Warriors of Light is essentially a simplified version of Final Fantasy. You're given just four characters, and you don't have to concern yourself with MP or an overwhelming number of menus to navigate through—just tap the appropriate icon on the touch screen to perform an action. It's fairly simple, yes, but it's also quite charming.

Monster Hunter Tri Wii

Monster Hunter Tri is all about cooperation: you and up to three friends have to work together to hunt down giant dinosaurlike creatures. It sounds pretty basic, but there's a good amount of character customization, too. Look for it in the US this spring.

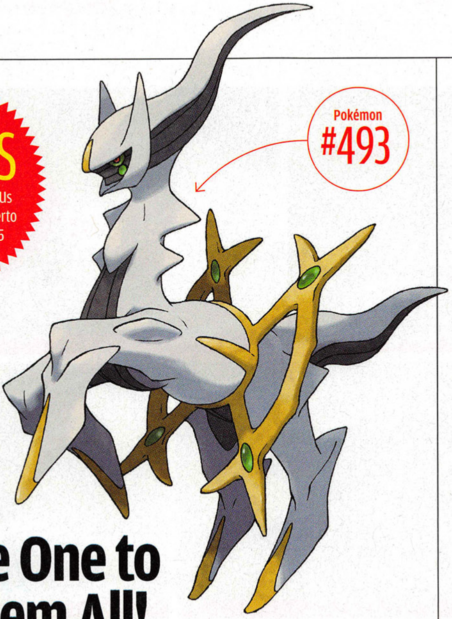


TATSUNOKO VS. CAPCOM: ULTIMATE ALL-STARS Wii

TSUMUJI DS

ARCEUS

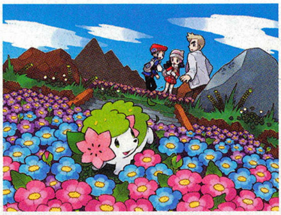
Distribution at Toys"R"Us stores in the US and Puerto Rico from 11/7 to 11/15

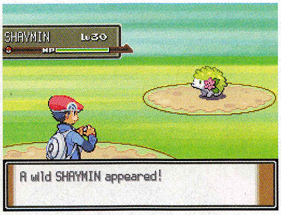


Get the One to End Them All!

The final addition to your **Pokémon Diamond Version**, **Pokémon Pearl Version**, and **Pokémon Platinum Version** Pokédex is nearly here.

We're not kidding—this is the last Pokémon that will ever be discovered in Pokémon Diamond, Pokémon Pearl, and Pokémon Platinum Versions! From November 7th through the 15th, the rare, Normal-type Alpha Pokémon Arceus will be available for distribution at all Toys"R"Us stores in the US and Puerto Rico. Just bring your Nintendo DS with one of the games mentioned above and Arceus is yours! You'll definitely want this Pokémon on your team since it has the Ability Multitype that allows it to change type along with its color with the use of certain items. With such a versatile Pokémon on your side, you'll be ready for just about anything an opposing Trainer can throw at you! —CHRIS SL.





A wild SHAYMIN appeared!

More Distribution News!

There have been lots of great distributions happening lately for Pokémon games. If you missed your chance at getting the Member Card to catch Darkrai, you can still nab Oak's Letter in Pokémon Platinum Version on Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection and use it to catch Shaymin. Oak's Letter will be available from 9/28 through 11/8, so get it while you can and don't miss your chance to catch Shaymin! (Be sure to check www.pokemon.com for more info.)

GAME WATCH

forecast

Wii		
Academy of Champions	Ubisoft	11/09
Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel	Majesco	HOL 09
Arc Rise Fantasia	XSEED	2/10
Band Hero	Activision	11/09
Build-A-Bear Workshop: Friendship Valley	The Game Factory	11/09
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare	Activision	11/09
Calling	Hudson	SPR 10
Chaotic	Activision	11/09
Def Jam Rapstar	4mm	HOL 09
Dodge Racing: Charger vs. Challenger	Zoo	11/09
EA Sports Active—Expansion Pack 1	Electronic Arts	HOL 09
Endless Ocean 2	Nintendo	Q1 10
F1 2009	Codemasters	11/09
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers	Square Enix	Q4 09
Flip's Twisted World	Majesco	WIN 09
Food Network: Cook or Be Cooked	Namco Bandai	11/09
Fragile: Farewell Ruins of the Moon	XSEED	1/10
Gladiator A.D.	TBA	TBA
Grease	505	TBA
The Grinder	TBA	TBA
Guitar Hero Van Halen	Activision	12/09
Hot Wheels: Battle Force 5	Activision	11/09
Jakers! Let's Explore	Graffiti	Q3 09
Jambo! Safari Animal Rescue	Sega	WIN 09
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	Ubisoft	11/09
Just Dance	Ubisoft	HOL 09
Kamen Rider Dragon Knight: The Video Game	D3Publisher	12/09
The Legend of Zelda*	Nintendo	TBA
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	LucasArts	11/09
LEGO Rock Band	Warner Bros.	11/09
Line Attack Heroes	Nintendo	TBA
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	Warner Bros.	SPR 10
Lost in Shadow	Hudson	SUM 10
Metroid: Other M	Nintendo	2010
Monado: Beginning of the World	Nintendo	TBA
Monkey Ball: Step & Roll	Sega	SPR 10
Monster Hunter Tri	Capcom	Q1 10
Mr. T	TBA	TBA
My Baby 2	SouthPeak	11/09
Naruto Shippuden: Clash of Ninja Revolution 3	Tomy	11/09
Need for Speed Nitro	Electronic Arts	11/09
New Super Mario Bros. Wii	Nintendo	11/09

RED TEXT = TITLES ADDED THIS MONTH. *TENTATIVE TITLE NOTE: RELEASE DATES OFTEN CHANGE.

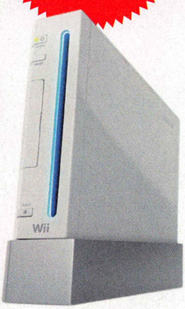
No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle	Ubisoft	Q1 10
Pizza Boy	Majesco	2009
Planet 51	Sega	11/09
Pop'n Music	Konami	FALL 09
The Princess and the Frog	Disney	11/09
Pro Evolution Soccer 2010	Konami	FALL 09
Pyroblazer	TBA	TBA
Red Steel 2	Ubisoft	Q1 10
Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles	Capcom	11/09
Resident Evil Archives: Resident Evil Zero	Capcom	1/10
Rooms: The Main Building	Hudson	2010
Runaway: The Dream of the Turtle	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
Sakura Wars: So Long, My Love	NIS America	11/09
Sam & Max Season Two	Atari	TBA
Scene It? Bright Lights! Big Screen!	Warner Bros.	HOL 09
Scene It? Twilight	Konami	11/09
Sengoku Basara Samurai Heroes	Capcom	2010
Shaun White Snowboarding: World Stage	Ubisoft	11/09
Shiren the Wanderer	Atlus	Q2 10
Sin and Punishment 2	Nintendo	Q1 10
The Sky Crawlers: Innocent Aces	XSEED	HOL 09
Sky Pirates of Neo Terra	Aspyr	FALL 09
Sled Shred	SouthPeak	11/09
Smart Kid's Journey to Adventure	UFO	11/09
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	Sega	Q1 10
Span Smasher	Nintendo	TBA
SpongeBob's Truth or Square	THQ	11/09
Super Mario Galaxy 2	Nintendo	2010
Sushi Go Round	SouthPeak	Q4 09
Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars	Capcom	1/10
Tetris	Majesco	SPR 10
Ultimate Party Challenge	Konami	11/09
We Cheer 2	Namco Bandai	11/09
Your Shape	Ubisoft	11/09

NINTENDO DS

Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth	Capcom	2/10
Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel	Majesco	HOL 09
Assassin's Creed II: Discovery	Ubisoft	11/09
Balloon Pop DS	UFO	11/09
Band Hero	Activision	11/09
Blood Bowl	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare: Mobilized	Activision	11/09
Chaotic	Activision	11/09
Chocolatier	Zoo	11/09
A Christmas Carol	Disney	11/09
Crime Scene	SouthPeak	12/09
Dawn of Heroes	Majesco	12/09
Deca Sports DS	Hudson	SPR 10
Dementium II	SouthPeak	2/10
Diner Dash: Flo on the Go	Zoo	11/09
Disciples II	Strategy First	TBA
DJ Star	Deep Silver	Q3 09
Doodle Hex	TBA	TBA
Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Reverie	Square Enix	TBA
Dream Chronicles	Zoo	11/09
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Chain Reaction	Deep Silver	TBA
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Critical Mass	Deep Silver	TBA
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Proving Grounds	Deep Silver	TBA
Ghost Trick	Capcom	2010
Glory of Heracles	Nintendo	2010
Golden Sun DS	Nintendo	2010
Grease	505	TBA
Hot Wheels: Battle Force 5	Activision	11/09
House M.D.	Legacy	HOL 09
Infinite Space	Sega	SPR 10
Jambo! Safari Animal Rescue	Sega	11/09
Jonas	Disney	11/09
Kamen Rider Dragon Knight: The Video Game	D3Publisher	12/09
Last King of Africa	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks	Nintendo	12/09
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	LucasArts	11/09
LEGO Rock Band	Warner Bros.	11/09
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	Warner Bros.	SPR 10
Montessori Music	SouthPeak	Q1 10
MX vs. ATV Reflex	THQ	Q4 09
My Baby 2	SouthPeak	11/09
Need for Speed Nitro	Electronic Arts	11/09
Petz Dogz Talent Show	Ubisoft	11/09
Petz Hamsterz Superstarz	Ubisoft	11/09
Picross 3D	Nintendo	TBA
Pirate Battle	Orbital Media	TBA
Planet 51	Sega	11/09
Pokémon HeartGold	Nintendo	SPR 10
Pokémon SoulSilver	Nintendo	SPR 10
Prank Your Neighbor	Dream-catcher	TBA
The Princess and the Frog	Disney	11/09
Puzzle Chronicles	Konami	11/09
Ragnarok Online DS	XSEED	2010
Rooms: The Main Building	Hudson	2010
Runaway: The Dream of the Turtle	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
Sands of Destruction	Sega	1/10
Secret Flirts	SouthPeak	12/09
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	Sega	Q1 10
SpongeBob's Truth or Square	THQ	11/09
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	LucasArts	11/09
Style Lab: Jewelry Design	Ubisoft	11/09
Style Lab: Makeover	Ubisoft	11/09
Style Savvy	Nintendo	HOL 09
Tetris	Majesco	SPR 10
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	Q4 09
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	Q4 09
WarioWare D.I.Y.	Nintendo	TBA
Warlords DS	Strategy First	TBA
Wedding Dash	Zoo	11/09

Need an idea for a present?
T-shirts make great gifts!
Little Miss Christmas t-shirt
Product: LM058
Festivus t-shirt
Product: SEIN030
Save 20%
visit 80sTees.com/greatgifts
Limited time offer.
Fuuudge Christmas Story t-shirt
Product: XMAS039
Mens Grinch Dr Seuss t-shirt by Junk Food
Product: SEUSS020
Royal Atari t-shirt
Product: ATARI046
Jr Ghostbusters t-shirt
Product: GHOST021
Jr Tanooki Suit Super Mario t-shirt
Product: NINT199
Bald Bull Punch-Out t-shirt
Product: NINT183
Atari t-shirt
Product: ATARI038
Red Wonder Woman Logo t-shirt by Junk Food
Product: DCCOM202
80sTees.com
great t-shirts for the kid in us all!
1-866-80sTees
www.80sTees.com/greatgifts

NEW PRICE ALERT



$199.99

Double Motion

Wii Sports Resort is best enjoyed with a friend, and Nintendo will make that easier starting October 12th with a new bundle that includes the game and two Wii MotionPlus accessories for $59.99. That's $10 cheaper than buying the existing bundle (which will still be available) and a second Wii MotionPlus separately. **—STEVE T.**

Wii
Wii Sports Resort
12 Sports
2 Wii MotionPlus INSIDE!

Pictures with Punch

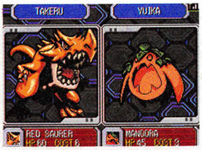
Real-life photos spawn in-game monsters in Konami's **Foto Fighter**, the first game made specifically for the Nintendo DSi.

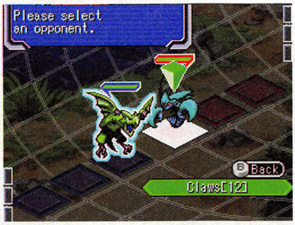
If you've been wondering where the games are that take advantage of the groundbreaking features of the Nintendo DSi handheld, wonder no more—Konami has announced Foto Fighter, the first North American retail game made exclusively for the system.

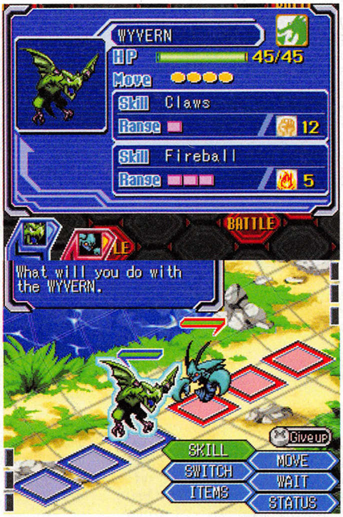
Foto Fighter proves that anyone who's imagined a monster lurking under their bed was right. The game lets you unleash beasts from otherwise-harmless pieces of furniture or anything else that you train your Nintendo DSi Camera lens on. (The game is incompatible with other Nintendo DS systems.) Foto Fighter analyzes any picture you snap and uses a shape-and-color-recognition program to produce one of 120 creatures from the results. The beast may not look exactly like your kitchen table with fangs, but it will retain the picture's dominant color.

You know the drill from there. With monsters in your midst, you'll stock them up and take them into tournament battle, recruiting as many as six for a single skirmish. Weapons upgrades, armor, and medicine give your troops a fighting chance as you advance through the more than 100 levels. With the cash that you claim from victories, you can purchase capsules (like film canisters), which enable you to convert more photos into creatures. There are three types of capsules and three cameras. The advanced equipment allows you to spawn increasingly powerful creatures from images of subjects such as your dog, your video game collection, or your brother, who may already be a monster.

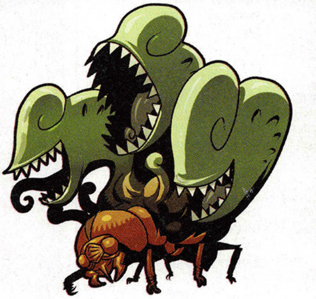
The game's local wireless functionality will include the option to battle with other photographers-turned-beast-wranglers, and monster swapping, a prerequisite for any creature collector. Expect the snapping and battling to get underway in January. **—GEORGE S.**

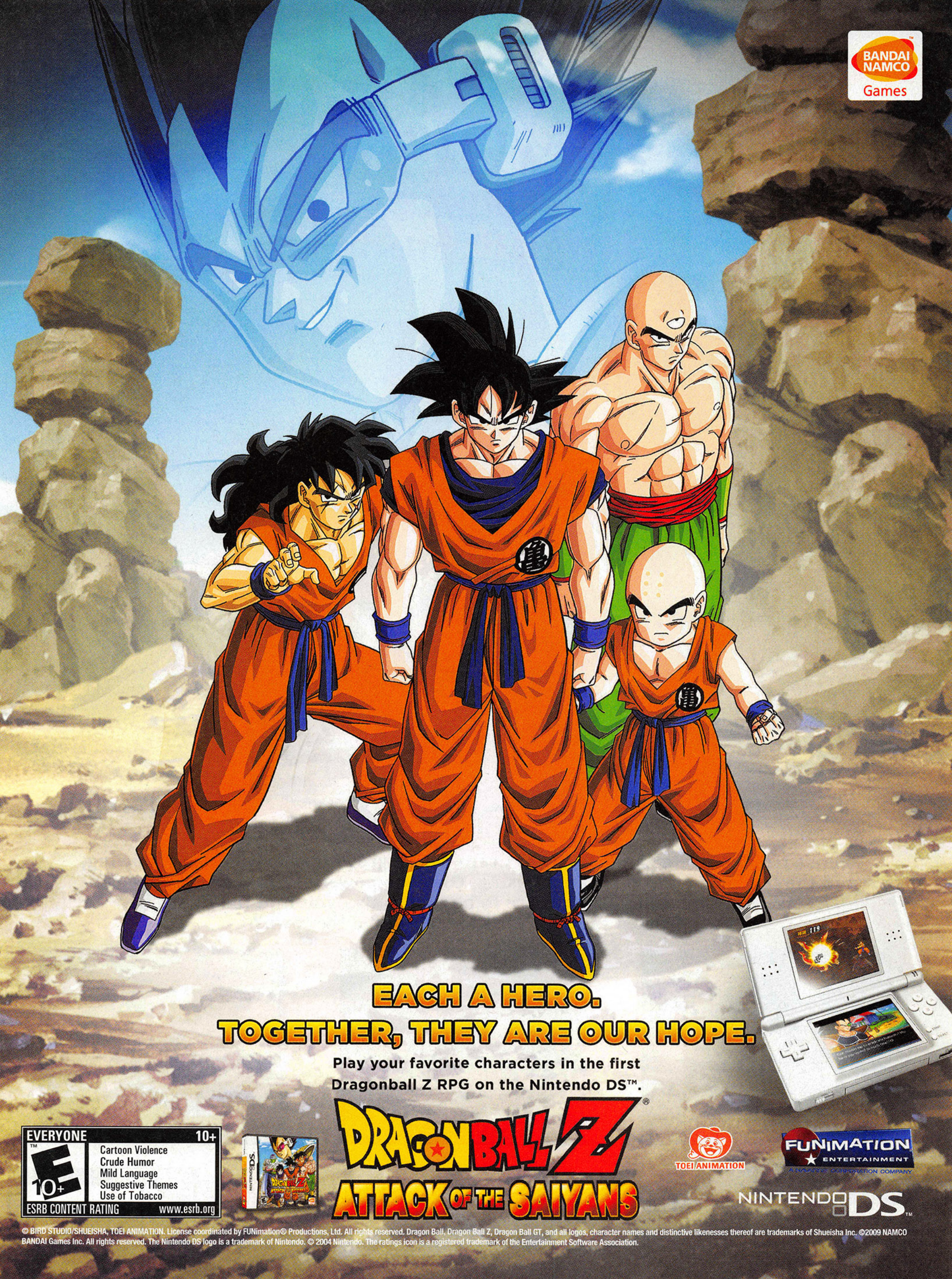



Please select an opponent.



What will you do with the WYVERN.





BANDAI NAMCO Games

EACH A HERO.
TOGETHER, THEY ARE OUR HOPE.

Play your favorite characters in the first
Dragonball Z RPG on the Nintendo DS™.

DRAGON BALL Z®
ATTACK OF THE SAIYANS

EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
Cartoon Violence
Crude Humor
Mild Language
Suggestive Themes
Use of Tobacco
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

TOEI ANIMATION

FUNIMATION ★ ENTERTAINMENT
A NAVARRE CORPORATION COMPANY

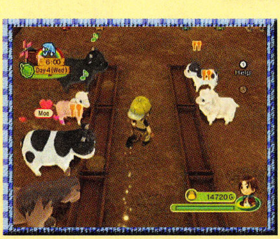
NINTENDO DS™

© BIRD STUDIO/SHUEISHA, TOEI ANIMATION. License coordinated by FUNimation® Productions, Ltd. All rights reserved. Dragon Ball, Dragon Ball Z, Dragon Ball GT, and all logos, character names and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of Shueisha Inc. ©2009 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. All rights reserved. The Nintendo DS logo is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2004 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

HARVEST MOON®
ANIMAL PARADE

Come Join the Parade!

There's trouble in Harmonica Town! Crops aren't growing, the wind isn't blowing, and the five elemental bells are missing. Only the power of the Harvest King can revive the land, but he's nowhere to be found. Can you find the five bells, awaken the Harvest King, and save the town?



7:00
Day7(Sat)
Help
Pick Up
Good Turnip
15559G

Cain

I'm Cain. I'm the owner
of Horn Ranch.
Nice to meet you♫

NATSUME®
Serious Fun®

www.natsume.com

Wii™

EVERYONE
E™
Alcohol Reference
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. ©2006 Nintendo. Harvest Moon, Natsume and Serious Fun are registered trademarks of Natsume Inc. ©2009 Natsume Inc. ©2009 Marvelous Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

HARVEST MOON® DS Sunshine Islands

Save the Sunshine Islands!

The islands are in peril! Years ago, many islands in the Sunshine Islands chain sank when a powerful earthquake struck. In Harvest Moon: Sunshine Islands, it's up to you to raise the sunken islands by finding the magical Sun Stones. With a little luck, you may even find true love and start a family along the way.

H. Goddess Festival Today!

So you'd better be ready to cheer for me, Mark!

Natalie

Stamina
Fullness
Spring
AM
Menu

SELECT : Change map display
Stamina
Fullness
Spring
AM 7:00
Eat
Menu

Stamina
Fullness
Spring
AM

You are truly a sight to behold, Michie!

Will

EVERYONE
E
Comic Mischief
Use of Alcohol
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

NINTENDO DS™

www.natsume.com

NATSUME®
Serious Fun®

©2006 Nintendo. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. Harvest Moon, Natsume and Serious Fun are registered trademarks of Natsume Inc.
©2009 Natsume Inc. ©2009 Marvelous Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

DOWNLOAD

IN THIS SECTION

WiiWARE PREVIEW
LostWinds: Winter of the Melodias

WiiWARE PREVIEW
Tales of Monkey Island Chapters 4 & 5

WiiWARE PREVIEW
Super Meat Boy

WiiWARE PREVIEW
Liight

CHANNEL UPDATE
Nintendo Channel & Nintendo Week

DSiWARE FEATURE
Evolution of Shantae

9 WiiWARE REVIEWS

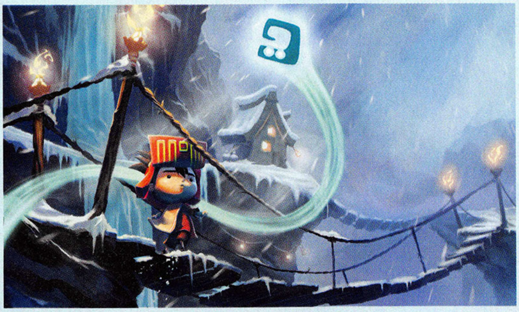
- 3-2-1, RATTLE BATTLE
- COLORZ
- CONTRA REBIRTH
- FAMILY TENNIS
- MART RACER
- SPACEBALL: REVOLUTION
- TALES OF MONKEY ISLAND CHAPTER 2: THE SIEGE OF SPINNER CAY
- TEXAS HOLD'EM POKER
- YOU, ME, AND THE CUBES

4 VIRTUAL CONSOLE REVIEWS

- CRASH 'N THE BOYS: STREET CHALLENGE
- LAST NINJA 2
- PHANTASY STAR
- SUPER RETURN OF THE JEDI

5 DSiWARE REVIEWS

- ART ACADEMY: FIRST SEMESTER
- CLUBHOUSE GAMES EXPRESS: FAMILY FAVORITES
- CLUBHOUSE GAMES EXPRESS: STRATEGY PACK
- OSCAR IN TOYLAND
- PUZZLE LEAGUE EXPRESS



Cool as Ice

There's a chill in the air in Frontier Developments' WiiWare sequel, LostWinds: Winter of the Melodias.

LostWinds, a unique platforming adventure created by Frontier Developments, was one of the first big downloadable hits for the Wii console. A launch title for WiiWare, the game masterfully mixed traditional 2-D gameplay (controlling the diminutive hero Toku via the Nunchuk controller's analog stick) with innovative Wii abilities (accomplished by guiding the cursorlike wind spirit Enril with the Wii Remote controller). Puzzle elements, a nonlinear game world, and a continually growing set of powers made the game a hit with players and critics alike, and the game's "to be continued" ending kept fans hungry for more. The question wasn't *if* there'd be a sequel, but *when*. The answer: very soon. (It could even be out by the time you read this.)

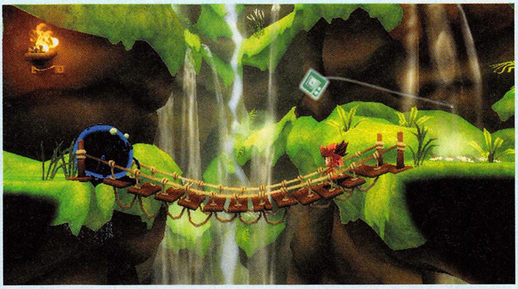
"The history of LostWinds dates back to when the Wii controller was first announced—though it was called the Revolution then, of course," explains producer (and Frontier founder) David Braben. "At that time, the game concept was proposed to take advantage of this wonderful new controller. The idea got a lot of strong supporters within Frontier, and they worked to gradually nail down the gameplay ideas, the ethos and mythos of the world.... That fantastic groundwork cultivated a large, very rich set of ideas, which were by no means exhausted in the first game.... There are a ton of ideas going forward—it's such a strong concept and world, and we have a huge enthusiasm for more."

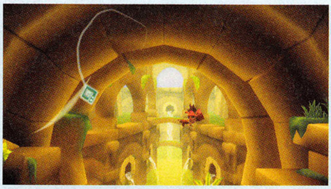
The sequel—titled LostWinds: Winter of the Melodias—builds upon the foundation of the original; you again help Toku and Enril on their journey as they explore the enchanting world of Mistralis and battle the minions of the evil Balasar. You start the game able to use all of the powers acquired in the previous title, such as gusts to help Toku jump, slipstreams for manipulating fire and water (or for Toku to ride), and vortices for lifting things into the air.

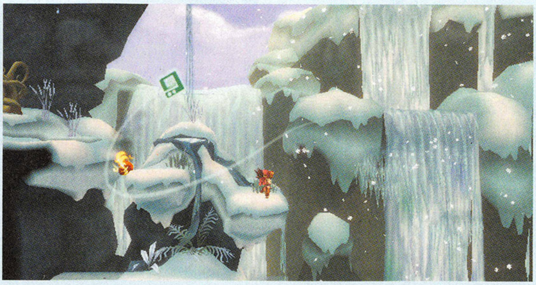
Naturally, Winter of the Melodias features new powers, too; as the game's title suggests, frozen landscapes are at the crux of the additions. Early in their quest, Toku and Enril gain the aid of Sonté, the spirit of seasons, and she grants them the power to change the season from summer to winter. By finding special statues and pressing the Z Button, you can transform the environment from lush and green to cold and icy (and back again), allowing you to solve puzzles, reach new areas, and more.

"In the same way the first game worked very coherently, where things felt 'right,' the differences between summer and winter feel 'right,'" asserts Braben. "In winter all pools of water are turned to slippery, impenetrable ice; it snows outside and drawing a vortex in the air causes a snowball to be created that you can then throw around; if you gust enemies with your wind powers they get wind-chill and freeze; and, particularly early on, Toku has to be kept warm with fire. In summer you can go swimming in the pools—taking care not to let Toku run out of oxygen—[and] you can create clouds and even use them to move water from pool to pool."

But changing seasons isn't the only new trick the heroes have up their sleeves. Alongside the aforementioned







[Right] With winter comes new gameplay possibilities.

swimming and enemy-freezing, you can take advantage of a mighty cyclone ability that you can put to multiple uses.

"Cyclone is a really useful new power," Braben comments. "You press A and B together to indicate where you want to create the cyclone, and then make a lasso motion with the Wii Remote to energize the cyclone. Once created, you can use the cyclone to transport Toku to otherwise-inaccessible places, attack powerful enemies, create clouds by siphoning all the water from a pool up into the air, and even drill through the earth by gusting down through the cyclone. [It's] the 'Swiss Army Knife' of Enril's wind powers!"

Matching the new powers is a renewed emphasis on story. While Toku and Enril are still trying to thwart Balasar's plans to conquer Mistralis, there are extra—more personal—layers to the tale, such as finding out what happened to Toku's explorer mother, Magdi, who's gone missing while on an expedition.

"It's not rammed down the player's throat, but there is a lot more depth to the story for players who want it," states Braben. "The first game's story was very straightforward, whereas Winter of the Melodias is a little richer, offering a couple of entwined arcs: the search for Magdi, and uncovering the fate of the Melodia people who disappeared from Mistralis centuries before. Entwined with this is the story of Riveren, Toku's nemesis—where Toku found Enril, Riveren found a piece of the evil Balasar—so his story is a sort of dark mirror image of Toku's."

As the tale unfolds, you'll travel to all-new regions of Mistralis, including Summerfalls Village (which is, ironically, trapped in an eternal winter), the Chilling Peaks mountain range, and Melodia City. You'll also face off against a fresh set of foes serving Balasar, such as snow monsters, fire- and water-enhanced versions of the Glorbs (the most common enemy in the first LostWinds), a large creature called a Glarb, and Pincer beasts (which attack from underground), as well as Riveren, who's tasked with spreading poison and decay throughout Mistralis. It all adds up to a quest that promises to be bigger and more fulfilling than its predecessor.

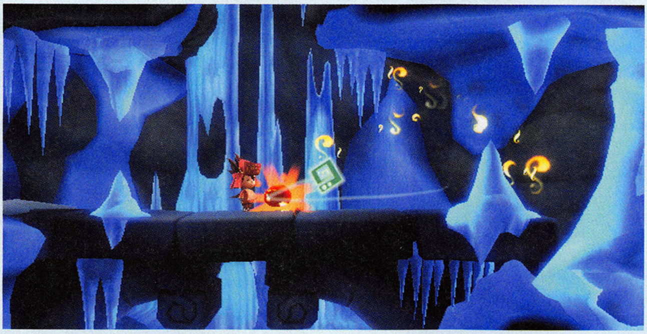
"We're confident that Winter of the Melodias will be significantly longer than the first game for any given player," Braben proclaims. "We have been able to learn a lot from our experience of developing the first game, and so have been able to squeeze even more high-quality gameplay into the space available to us. We've made significant optimizations, which have really helped us to save space, and therefore add more content and different types of gameplay."

As to what the different types of gameplay are, Braben doesn't want to give away any big surprises just yet, but he says that one of them, near the beginning of the game, involves climbing the Chilling Peaks via "a really interesting combination of using fixed and moving platforms to get Toku around." He also promises that his team has been listening to the few player complaints about the first game, and in response they've added components to offer more guidance to the player and prevent them from feeling lost.

"LostWinds generally for us is an explorative experience, which we certainly don't want to detract from," says Braben, "but in response to player feedback we've thought very hard about how we can give more general guidance and context to the player whilst still retaining that explorative feel. We've used a variety of techniques, including a high-level map that gives general context, and are very happy with the balance we've struck."

Judging by what we've seen so far, LostWinds: Winter of the Melodias appears set to surpass its predecessor in every respect. Whether you've played the original or not (and if you haven't, what are you waiting for?), you're likely to be enthralled by this WiiWare exclusive. As Braben puts it, "Very many people worldwide have already downloaded and enjoyed the first LostWinds game. Winter of the Melodias takes the whole experience up a notch in just about every way, and stands [up to] comparison with the very best Wii games, download or disc."

—CHRIS H.



Guybrush's Grand Finale

Telltale's episodic WiiWare adventure comes to a thrilling conclusion in the final chapters of **Tales of Monkey Island**.

"Horrible things happen!" proclaims Mike Stemmle, game designer on episodic WiiWare adventure Tales of Monkey Island. "Horrible things happen that must be dealt with in the fifth episode."

That's quite a statement, considering what mighty pirate Guybrush Threepwood and his associates have gone through in just the first few chapters of the series. So far Guybrush has unleashed a voodoo pox that's cursed all of the Caribbean, been captured by a crazed doctor, had his hand cut off by his alleged greatest admirer, been forced to team up with his former arch-enemy, and been eaten by a gargantuan manatee—and that's really just the tip of the iceberg. So when Stemmle says that horrible things are in store for our puzzle-solving hero in Tales of Monkey Island Chapter 5: Rise of the Pirate God—the final installment of Telltale's comical point-and-click saga—we have no doubt that the game will be epic.

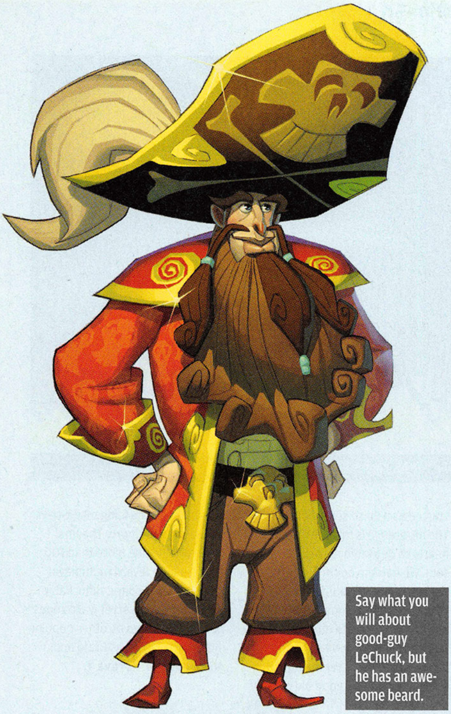
As the title of the game reveals, Chapter 5 revolves around the appearance of and battle against the biggest baddie in the Monkey Island universe—the so-called Pirate God. "The fifth episode is pretty much an insanely frantic downhill chase," says Stemmle. "How will Guybrush get back and defeat the ultimate bad guy, who's really now an ultimate, ultimate bad guy?"

You'll do it, at least in part, by exploring an all-new mystical locale—the Land of the Undead—and taking advantage of voodoo magic. You'll also, naturally, do it by solving plentiful goofy yet logical item- and dialogue-based puzzles.

"There's going to be a very clever and emotionally meaningful take on the insult swordfighting," Stemmle reveals, referring to one of the series's trademarks. "[And] there's going to be a fairly cool homage [to the part in the original Secret of Monkey Island when] Guybrush is desperately trying to spray LeChuck with the root-beer bottle while he is getting punched around Melee Island. I think we may have something like that—sort of an action-packed [scene] where the ultimate evil is basically treating you like a rag doll.... And we did set up one very cool ending...when we sat down with [original Secret of Monkey Island creator] Ron Gilbert. People will be very happy with how that comes across. It will cement Elaine and Guybrush as the power couple of the Caribbean."

Many of the items that players have had in their inventory throughout previous chapters of Tales of Monkey Island will also come into play. "We just got part of one of the big puzzles together that actually makes use of a number of objects from previous episodes that players may have utterly forgotten about or actually found kind of annoying," notes Stemmle.

Just as importantly, Chapter 5 deals with all of the unresolved plot points brought up in the previous chapters. The circumstances surrounding the opening scene of the first chapter—in which Guybrush was supposed to slay LeChuck with a mystic-voodoo-enhanced sword—get fully explained, for example, and Guybrush's severed hand is dealt with. The sometimes-tumultuous relationships between the main characters—Guybrush, his wife Elaine, the Voodoo Lady, villain-turned-good-guy LeChuck, and pirate hunter Morgan LeFlay—are also addressed, apparently with some surprising twists. Notes Stemmle, "The relationship



Say what you will about good-guy LeChuck, but he has an awesome beard.

between Guybrush and Elaine and the Voodoo Lady may shift considerably by the end of the fifth episode."

By the time the credits roll, however, all the characters will have their chance to shine. "[Guybrush] gets to be pretty darn heroic at the end," Stemmle admits. "Everybody will, actually. Elaine and Morgan will get really nice moments in the fifth episode that will hopefully mirror each other well." As for LeChuck? "Anyone who follows Monkey Island probably can figure out, are we really going to let LeChuck be a good, human guy all season long? Probably not."

If you're still not convinced that Tales of Monkey Island Chapter 5 is going to be the ultimate entry in the Monkey Island series, Stemmle offers the following tease: "In episode five you'll see how Guybrush climbs his way out of the worst situation he has ever been put in and manages to shatter a cycle that he has been on since the very first Monkey Island game. It's basically a significant turning point in his life. It will redefine everything you think you know about Monkey Island."

Of course, if you play only Chapter 5—which is tentatively scheduled for a late-November or early-December release—you're missing out on the rest of the story. The first three chapters (Launch of the Screaming Narwhal, The Siege of Spinner Cay, and Lair of the Leviathan) are out now, and, depending on when you're reading this, Chapter 4: The Trial and Execution of Guybrush Threepwood, may be available for download as well.

Though Chapter 5 is the final, dramatic battle, Chapter 4 is the climax that ties up many loose ends prior to the final conflict. "The fourth episode is where a lot of things come together," asserts executive producer Brett Tosti. "[Guybrush] gets taken back to Flotsam [Island], sort of where the whole adventure started—kind of a full-circle thing—and he's put on trial for the perceived wrongs that he's done all the residents there."

Despite taking place in a familiar location, a nighttime setting gives Flotsam Island a fresh look. Additionally, all-new areas to explore, including the interior of a nightclub (where Guybrush was previously involved in an off-camera bar fight) and the local courthouse, add diversity. As Guybrush struggles to prove his innocence, he'll have to solve numerous puzzles, enlist the aid of the increasingly pox-influenced Elaine, engage in compliment swordfighting to prevent Elaine and Morgan from killing each other, and protect himself from the twisted Marquis De Singe (who has nefarious plans for both Guybrush and Elaine). He'll also have to face the return of one of the most popular supporting characters in the Monkey Island series: Stan, the former slimy used-boat salesman, who's now a slimy prosecuting attorney.

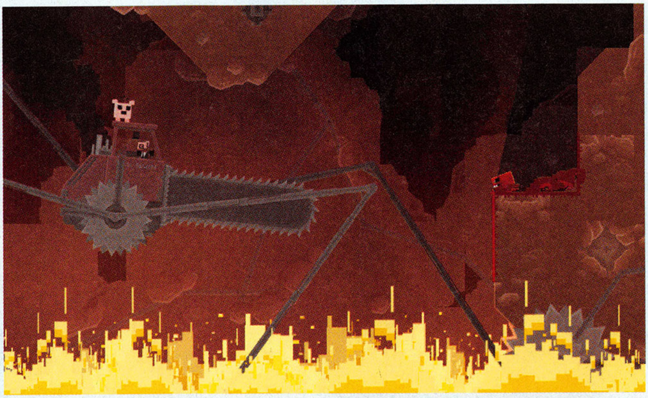
One thing you won't have to deal with, hopefully, are the choppiness and other technical issues that plagued players' first visit to Flotsam Island. "We work on our engine," says Stemmle. "Every episode we are tuning our engine quite a bit. A lot of that stuff going on in...the first episode is utterly insane. We've kind of backed off a little, but at the same time...our engine has gotten better and will not make things melt anymore."

As Chapter 4 comes to an end, huge secrets will be brought to light, and some of the biggest plot threads from previous episodes will be resolved—both the pox and De Singe will be dealt with—but even bigger problems will be introduced to set the stage for the "horrible things" that arrive in Chapter 5. It all adds up to some of the most grandiose titles yet available for WiiWare.

"I think if people have enjoyed any of the other episodes, the fourth and the fifth are far and away even more exciting and even more humorous," Tosti concludes. "We're putting the characters in even more extreme and ridiculous, but logical and funny, situations. I think it's finally answering a lot of questions that people had about all the characters." **—CHRIS H.**

Prime Cut

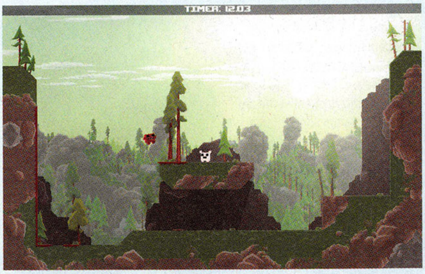
Vegans and pantywaists beware! Platforming's newest hero, **Super Meat Boy**, is about to hand you your rump on a platter.

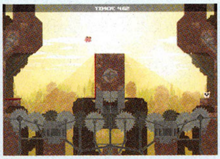


Meat Boy will die, die, and die again as he battles bosses like this one to save his beloved Bandage Girl.

The titular hero of Super Meat Boy is a walking slab of raw meat who drips blood everywhere he goes. The love of his life, Bandage Girl, is made up entirely of bandages. It's a match made in heaven. Unfortunately, our charming couple is separated when the jealous Dr. Fetus (a fetus in a jar wearing a suit and a monocle) one day kidnaps Bandage Girl. Thus begins one of the most bizarre WiiWare platformers.

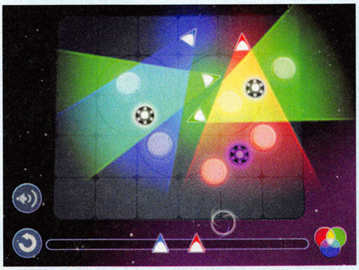
For a hunk of meat, our protagonist is surprisingly nimble, which the game showcases with a big emphasis on wall-jumping. It's a lot like another game that started as a Flash sensation—N+. The difference is that N+ wasn't nearly so determined to crush your soul. We had the opportunity to sample a smorgasbord of levels from throughout Super Meat Boy, and some of the late offerings had more than one NP editor on the verge of tears. Yet the tight controls and some good old-fashioned platforming magic have us yearning for more. The final game will include more than 100 single-player levels, multiplayer modes, a level editor, unlockable characters, and secret warp zones to stages inspired by other popular indie games, such as Braid and Alien Hominid. **—STEVE T.**





Simply Brilliant

One of the brightest spots in the upcoming WiiWare lineup is puzzle title **Liight**.

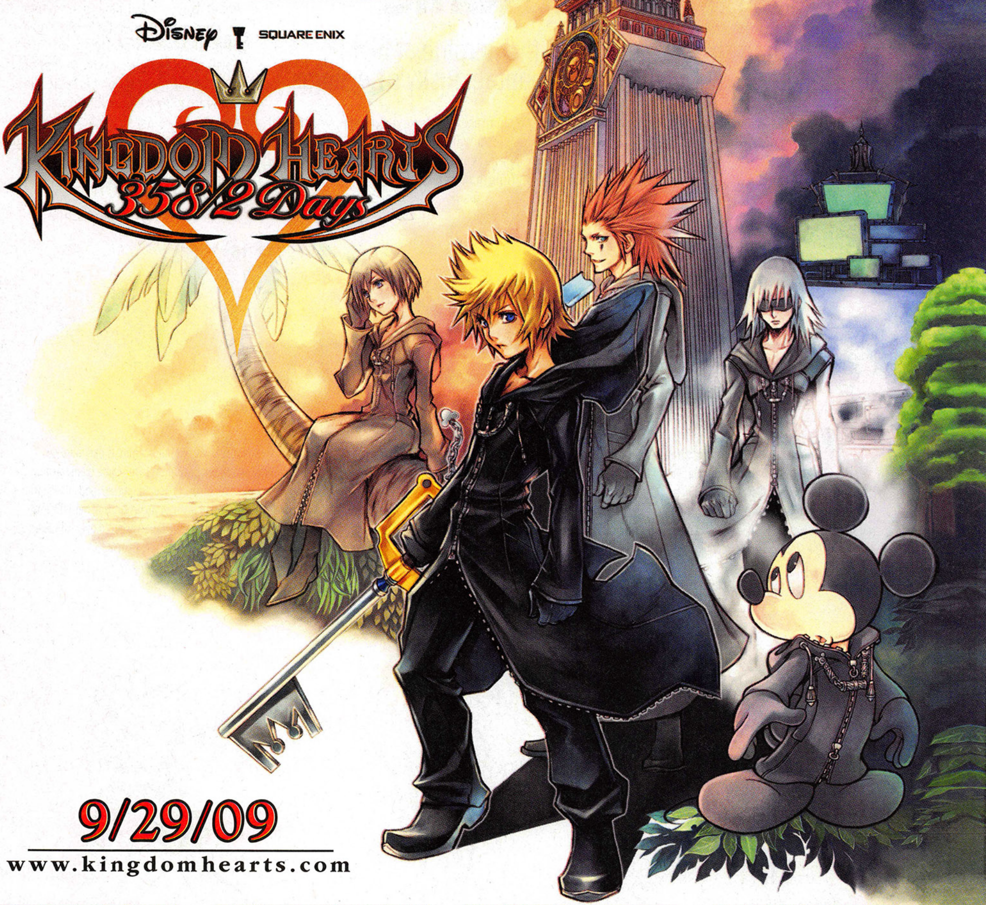


There are a lot of puzzle games available for WiiWare, but one poised to outshine the rest is Liight from developer Walljump Studio. Liight is a thinker's puzzle game in which you place cones of light on a grid to illuminate target objects. The cones of light each produce a specific color and when two cones overlap, their colors blend. So, to accurately illuminate a green target object, you must align a blue light cone and a yellow light cone so that they both hit the target. You place the light sources by pointing with the Wii Remote, then rotate their beams by twisting the remote with your wrist. The controls are so simple that as soon as you pick up the Wii Remote you know what to do.

Of course, it's not as easy as that: there are usually multiple targets, a limited number of light cones at your disposal, and obstacles that block light from passing, among other tricky little gameplay elements. With more than 100 levels of maddeningly increasing difficulty, it's going to keep you busy for quite a while.

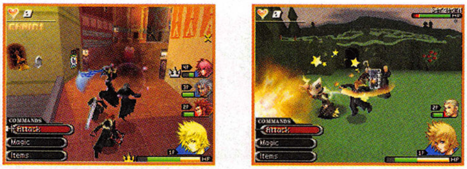
Liight is a game that begs for a level creator, and sure enough, there is one. In the brief time we played, we were impressed with how easy it was to use: making the levels felt nearly as fun as playing the game. What's even cooler is that once you've made your levels, you can share them with friends via WiiConnect24. Neat stuff. If all goes according to schedule, Liight could be available by the end of this year. **—CHRIS SH.**

WHAT MATTERED THE MOST WAS REMEMBERED THE LEAST

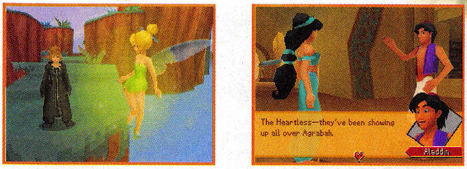

Disney
SQUARE ENIX
Kingdom Hearts
358/2 Days

9/29/09

www.kingdomhearts.com


COMMANDS
Attack
Magic
Items
COMMANDS
Attack
Magic
Items

Play alone or with up to 4 friends in the series-first multiplayer mode!


The Heartless—they've been showing up all over Agrabah.

Appearances from familiar Disney characters, such as King Mickey, Aladdin, Tinker Bell, and more!

EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Fantasy Violence

NINTENDO DS™

Disney

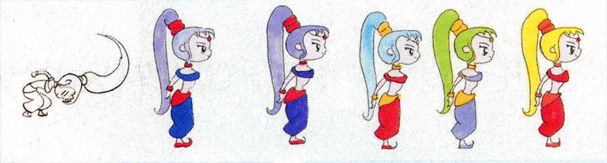
SQUARE ENIX

© Disney. Developed by SQUARE ENIX/h.a.n.d.
SQUARE ENIX and the SQUARE ENIX logo are registered trademarks of Square Enix Holdings Co., Ltd. in the United States and/or other countries. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. ©2004 Nintendo.
The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

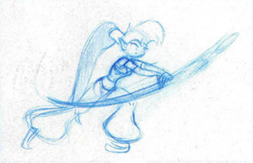
Dreaming of Genie

Take a behind-the-scenes look at the heroine of highly anticipated DSiWare adventure Shantae: Risky's Revenge.

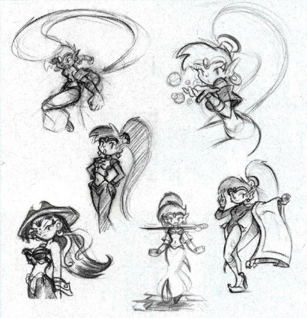
If you didn't read last issue's earth-shattering feature story on Shantae: Risky's Revenge, then you missed out on the reveal of the most promising, most visually impressive DSiWare game to date. A long-awaited sequel to a Game Boy Color game released in 2002, Shantae: Risky's Revenge is the first part of an epic trilogy starring the titular Shantae—a sassy, belly-dancing, shape-shifting half-genie. Though the game is only Shantae's second outing, the developers at WayForward have been hoping to release a sequel for years—many of these sketches are for games that never saw the light of day. To find out more about the creation of the heroine and learn how she has evolved since her humble beginnings, we collected the following sketches and comments from Shantae mastermind and WayForward creative director Matt Bozon.



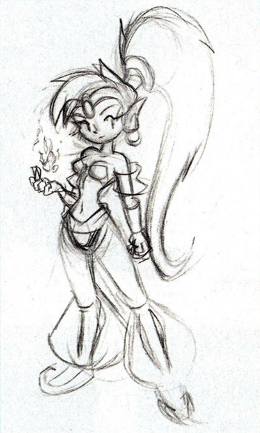
1994 "Erin Bell (my future wife) designed Shantae during the SNES era. Her idea was a hair-whipping genie that could belly dance to summon up magic. She drew these first few images to explain the concept. Erin named the character after a little girl who attended her day camp. After laying down the broad designs, Erin passed the character-design reins to me. It was such a powerful act of trust that we soon were married. Well, not really, but it does make the story more interesting."



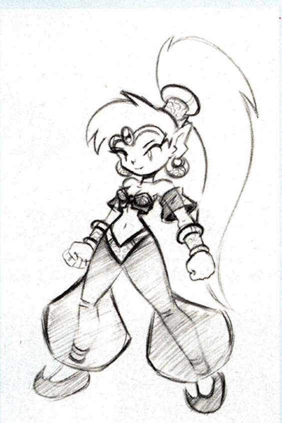
1996 "At first, Shantae would summon animals like monkeys, elephants, and tigers to aid her. Later came transforming into mythological creatures like the Harpy. I tried adding weapons like staffs and scimitars, which we soon ditched in favor of incorporating her hair into the fighting moves. We kept pitching the game, but were told over and over that male gamers would never play a girl character. Tsk tsk."



2003 "By GBA I was eager to make the character easier for other artists to work with. Over the last few years we'd all struggled with the sash getting in the way of those nice dance poses, so I brought it down off the hips so that her silhouette wouldn't be so lumpy. I liked the idea of taking her to other lands on a carpet or giant bird, so I messed around with costumes she could wear for various occasions."



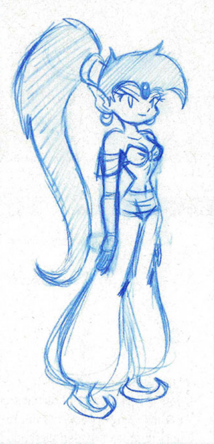
2004 "Coming off Sigma Star Saga, which featured slightly older characters, I could see how Shantae had been incrementally becoming less kidlike. This design is probably what I'd call "the standard" Shantae, if one ever really existed. She's a young lass here, trapped somewhere between childhood and adulthood. She's got the signature hair, and the sash has been replaced by a sort of trim that does the same job. And for the first time in a while she wasn't standing quite so tall."

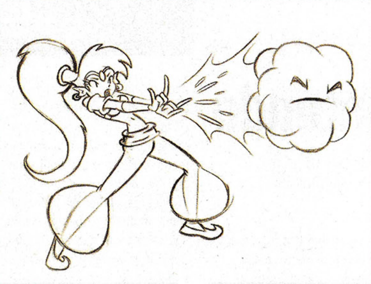


2005 "On GameCube, we built her 3-D model from a previous design, but found that at long camera distances she didn't read too well onscreen. And at third-person view, she was hidden by her hair. The fix was a stumpy triangular design with overstated hips and large feet to ground the character. Seeing the character in 3-D exposed many problems with the [design]. The harem sleeves never did attach anywhere, and her rockin' '80s bangs had Flintstone Face Syndrome, needing to flip at will. We went back to the drawing board, literally."

ABOUT THE WRITER:

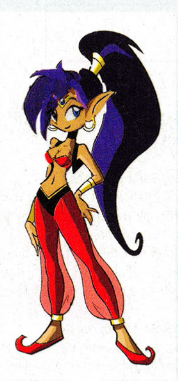
Matt Bozon is the creative director of WayForward and has been in the gaming industry for 15 years. His interests include 2-D video games and giant transforming robots.

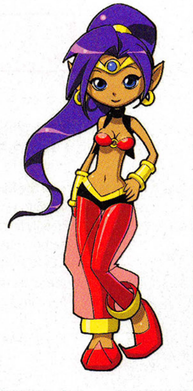


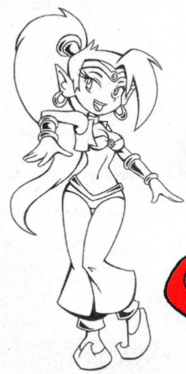


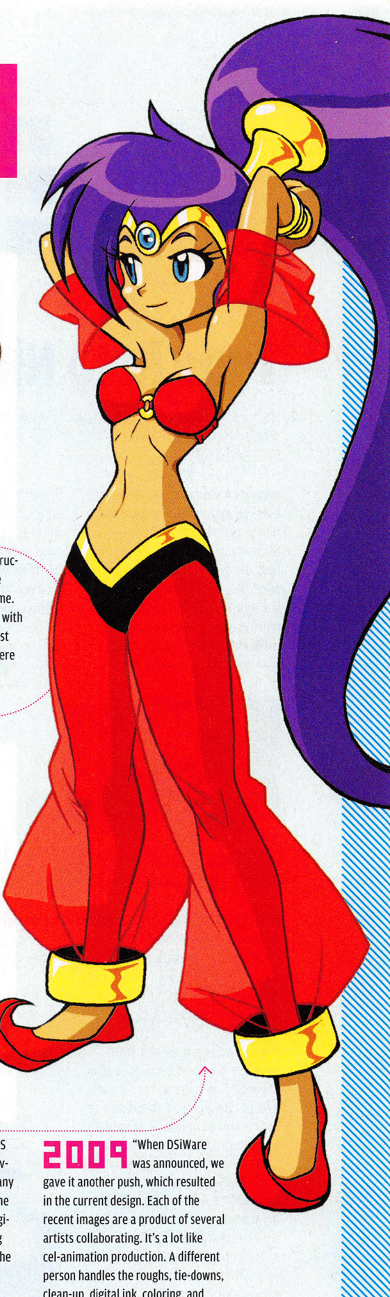
2000 “After escaping the Y2K, Erin (who’d been off working on seasons 1 and 2 of *Futurama*) came back to WayForward. By now I’d locked in the style and proportions. Shantae’s bracelets became wrist guards, she got her ears pierced, and she lost the long trailing sash we often had around her waist. This sketch became the promotional image for Shantae [for] Game Boy Color, which was sent off to potential publishers along with the demo.”

2001 “An image from the GBC instruction booklet. She’s seen here summoning the Storm Puff magic from the game. She’s a bit more dynamic-looking than before, with more straights and curves in the line work. Most of the images associated with the GBC game were based on this design.”







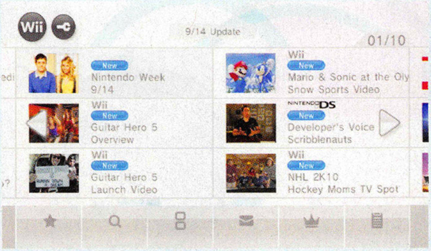


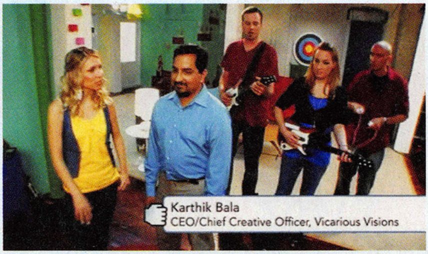
2006 “I enlisted the help of several artists (talented friends working on shows like *Teen Titans*, and popular manga and magazines) to explore the character, really encouraging new directions. Although this was mainly an exercise, it brought about some very cool results. Sleeves were gone and grounding black elements were brought in. This is by far the most heroic she’s ever looked.”

2006 “At the end of the redesign phase leading up to DS pitches, I stopped at Robert DeJesus’s supercute Shantae design. It put all of the key color elements into place that we still use today, and her age nicely contrasted against Risky’s. Now we had this budding kid hero battling a world-traveled tyrant woman. For the first time, Shantae and Risky didn’t stand as equals, which was refreshing.”

2007 “With a DS demo moving around to publishers, many comments came back that she had lost too much of her original look. So we tried to bring back the old face, but keep the new costume.”

2009 “When DSiWare was announced, we gave it another push, which resulted in the current design. Each of the recent images are a product of several artists collaborating. It’s a lot like cel-animation production. A different person handles the roughs, tie-downs, clean-up, digital ink, coloring, and then adding graphical touches. Voilà! Today’s version of Shantae.”


Wii
9/14 Update
01/10
New
Nintendo Week
9/14
Wii
New
Mario & Sonic at the Oly
Snow Sports Video
Wii
New
Guitar Hero 5
Overview
NINTENDO DS
New
Developer's Voice
Scribblenauts
Wii
New
Guitar Hero 5
Launch Video
Wii
New
NHL 2K10
Hockey Moms TV Spot

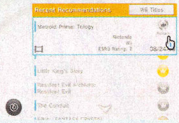

Karthik Bala
CEO/Chief Creative Officer, Vicarious Visions

Tune in to Nintendo

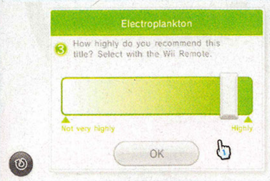
New features and an exclusive TV-show-style program, *Nintendo Week,* can be found on the newly enhanced Nintendo Channel.

Already a source of game trailers, user ratings, game demos for the Nintendo DS handheld, and more, the Nintendo Channel received an upgrade in mid September that added several new features. For starters, it's easier than ever to find out what games have been recommended by fellow players, thanks to an enhanced rating system that assigns platinum, gold, silver, and bronze awards to the most-lauded Wii games. You can now recommend DS games, as well; to do so, you must put the game you want to recommend (or warn people about) into your DS system, and use wireless communications between the Wii console and the DS to initiate the process. On top of that, the Nintendo Channel now features easier-to-use navigation and the ability to view game videos in higher resolution (you can still watch standard-resolution videos if you prefer). Perhaps the biggest addition, however, is *Nintendo Week*—a weekly original video series that covers recent happenings in the world of Nintendo. In 10 minutes or so, hosts Gary and Alison deliver a quick dose of game previews, interviews, event coverage, and more—plus a liberal helping of goofy humor. To check out the upgraded Nintendo Channel, simply log on to the Wii Shop Channel and download it for free in the Wii Channels section.

—CHRIS H.

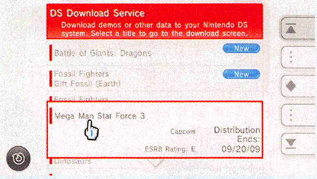

Recent Recommendations
Wii Titles
Metroid Prime: Trilogy
ESRB Rating: T
08/24
Little King's Story
Resident Evil Archives: Resident Evil
The Conduit

screen image simulated


Electroplankton

How highly do you recommend this title? Select with the Wii Remote.

Not very highly
Highly
OK


DS Download Service

Download demos or other data to your Nintendo DS system. Select a title to go to the download screen.

Battle of Giants: Dragons
New
Fossil Fighters
Gift Fossil (Earth)
New
Mega Man Star Force 3
Capcom
ESRB Rating: E
Distribution Ends: 09/20/09

Gary and Alison obviously have pretty sweet gigs as the hosts of *Nintendo Week.* Since they're likely to be visiting your Wii system on a regular basis, we recently caught up with the duo to learn more about what makes them tick.

NINTENDO POWER **How excited were you when you found out you'd be hosting *Nintendo Week*?**

GARY I grew up with Nintendo—it's the only system I've ever owned. So I was *super* excited. I feel very lucky.

ALISON I was absolutely thrilled. Now I get to play games before they even come out!

What kind of gamer are you?

GARY I like to mix it up and play a variety of games, but I really love puzzle games. I'm addicted to Scribblenauts right now. I play it on the subway every day. Professor Layton is great, too. I'm also a big Mario fan from way back.

ALISON I love playing Wii with my friends and family. I love how social video gaming has become. Aside from all the Wii Sports, I still love all the old Super Nintendo games like Donkey Kong Country. It reminds me of being a kid.

Look for a special announcement on the Oct. 26 *Nintendo Week*!

What does it mean to you to be the host of *Nintendo Week*?

GARY It's great to be able to go to work and talk about something that I like so much. Everyone in my family has a Wii—my grandparents owned one before I did—so I'm a big fan.

ALISON It's cool to be able to bring gamers the latest news and information about games. It means so much to me to read their feedback.

What's the coolest part of the job?

GARY I love working with Alison and the production team—we have a great time filming the episodes. I also really like interviewing our guests and learning how they got into making video games. And...I get to go to work and play Wii and DS. How cool is that?!

ALISON Before *Nintendo Week*, I played a lot of games but didn't really know anything about how they were made. I love interviewing creators and learning about the thinking that went into the games. And, of course, working with Gary.

LIVE THE ADVENTURE
FROM THE BEGINNING
BANDAI NAMCO Games
DRAGON BALL
REVENGE of King Piccolo
Wii
EVERYONE
10+
E
10+
Cartoon Violence
Mild Language
Tobacco Reference
ESRB CONTENT RATING
www.esrb.org
TOEI ANIMATION
FUNIMATION ENTERTAINMENT
A NAVARRE CORPORATION COMPANY

© BIRD STUDIO/SHUEISHA, TOEI ANIMATION. License coordinated by FUNimation® Productions, Ltd. All rights reserved. Dragon Ball, Dragon Ball Z, Dragon Ball GT, and all logos, character names and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of Shueisha Inc.
©2009 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. All rights reserved. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2009 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

EVALUATION STATION

WiiWare

3-2-1, RATTLE BATTLE!

PUBLISHER: **TECMO**
GENRE: **PARTY GAME**
Wii POINTS: **500**

3-2-1, Rattle Battle! is a shining example of what not to do with motion controls. This minigame collection is primarily about shaking the Wii Remote like a spaz, and although there are elements of reaction and timing in several of the games, the action remains shallow throughout. Despite its billing as a party game, the title supports only one player at a time, and although you can compare scores online, downloading the ranking data is a pain. —**CHRIS H.**

Grumble Grumble

WiiWare

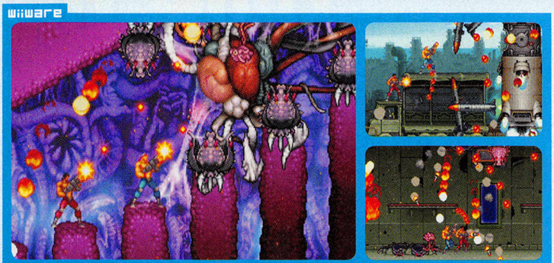
COLORZ

PUBLISHER: **EXKEE**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **700**

A game for extreme multitaskers, ColorZ has you guiding one space entity by pointing with your Wii Remote while you steer another alien with the Nunchuk's Control Stick. The UFOs absorb objects that match their own colors, and color-swapping and -combining give you a fighting chance in the rainbow mix of obstacles. Single-player, two-character simultaneous play is no easy task, but it's also unique and satisfying when you succeed. —**GEORGE S.**

Recommended

WiiWare



CONTRA REBIRTH

PUBLISHER: **KONAMI** › GENRE: **SHOOTER** › Wii POINTS: **1,000**

Chris H's Pick

Contra ReBirth is the video game equivalent of a blockbuster summer movie: kinda shallow, nonsensical story, but there's so much action and so many things exploding that you really don't care. Even though it's in a bite-sized package, this is pure Contra through and through—two-player run-and-gun intensity at its finest as you lay waste to an enemy alien army across five levels of horizontally and vertically scrolling 2-D chaos. It's rather familiar territory, chock-full of enemy fire to dodge, patterns to memorize, and impressive bosses to blast, but fans of the series wouldn't have it any other way. While Contra vets will appreciate the old-school feel, remixed tunes, and various nods to previous Contra games, this is also a great jumping-on point for newcomers thanks to the rather tame difficulty level (it's way easier than Contra 4 for DS) and low price point. The visuals could have been more detailed, but this is still essential playing for action/shooter fans.

Recommended

WiiWare

FAMILY TENNIS

PUBLISHER: **AKSYS GAMES**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Given the wide availability of Wii Sports and its iconic tennis title, it seems redundant for Aksys to tap its Family series for a serve-and-volley session. The Family Tennis court is smaller than that of Wii Sports Tennis, and the game's pace is much faster. If you don't have buglike reflexes, you'll have a hard time defeating AI opponents. The optional "first-person" view brings the camera down to court level, making the play more exciting, but even more challenging. —**GEORGE S.**

Hmmm...

WiiWare

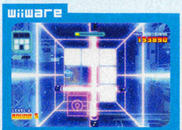
MART RACER

PUBLISHER: **JOJU GAMES**
GENRE: **RACING**
Wii POINTS: **800**

Mart Racer's premise—racing around grocery stores to collect items before your opponents—is pretty clever, but the actual game is lacking. The different characters play the same, the motion controls are imprecise, and there's no sense of progression (after completing a race, you're dumped back to the title screen). The Wi-Fi multiplayer support is nice, but this game won't hold your interest for long. —**PHIL T.**

Grumble Grumble

WiiWare



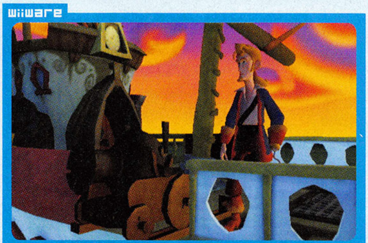
SPACEBALL: REVOLUTION

PUBLISHER: **VIRTUAL TOYS**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **800**

Firing balls to light up squares in a three-by-three grid sounds simple enough, but when you're angling your shots to bypass solid blocks, rotating beams, and other obstacles while battling a time limit, it can get pretty challenging—so much so that the game has a disclaimer when you boot it up stating it's not impossible. It's a unique concept that stays fun for a while, but retrying can be frustrating since the levels are lengthy. —**CHRIS H.**

Hmmm...

WiiWare



TALES OF MONKEY ISLAND CHAPTER 2: THE SIEGE OF SPINNER CAY

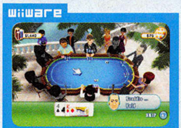
PUBLISHER: **TELLTALE** › GENRE: **ADVENTURE** › Wii POINTS: **1,000**

Chris H's Pick

The first installment of Tales of Monkey Island was a rousing and humorous adventure that was marred by glitches and technical issues (such as choppy gameplay). The follow-up, I'm pleased to say, has addressed most of those problems while retaining everything that was good about its predecessor, including clever item-oriented puzzles, great voice acting, and several laugh-out-loud moments. The game does feel much shorter than the first chapter, however.

Recommended

wiiware



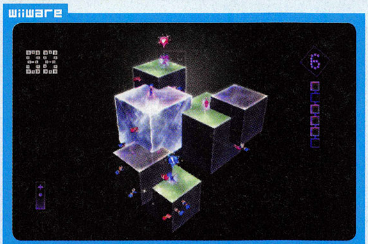
TEXAS HOLD'EM POKER

PUBLISHER: **GAMELOFT**
GENRE: **CARD GAME**
Wii POINTS: **600**

Gameloft's follow-up to Sexy Poker adopts a traditional approach with a tour structure and AI comparable to that of Digital Leisure's Texas Hold 'em Tournament. Your opponents have different playing styles, but you'll be able to cut a path through all with aggressive play. You can skip past action that doesn't involve your character, ensuring a fast pace. If you own Digital Leisure's title, this one adds only slightly better graphics. **—GEORGE S.**

Recommended

wiiware



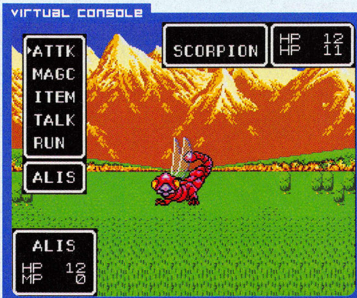
YOU, ME, AND THE CUBES

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** · GENRE: **PUZZLE** · Wii POINTS: **1,000**

Fallos look like humans, but scream like Pikmin when they plummet into the void in the unique and artful You, Me, and the Cubes. The object is to fling the Fallos in pairs onto clusters of floating cubes while keeping the cubes balanced; you shake the Wii Remote to load it up, point to select your targets, then make a throwing gesture. If you've assessed the structure's center of gravity correctly, all will be stable. If not, Fallos will tragically fall. A good toss that keeps everything steady is very satisfying. However, gameplay can be clumsy and distracting when the timer, the Fallos count, and the graphic that indicates if your remote is loaded are all vying for your attention. The introduction of curious Pale Fallos and new cube types add variety, but the stages can often be indistinguishable. **—GEORGE S.**

Recommended

virtual console



SHOP
SHOP
SHOP

THE CAMINEET
RESIDENTIAL AREA

PHANTASY STAR

PLATFORM: **MASTER SYSTEM** · PUBLISHER: **SEGA** · GENRE: **RPG** · ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1988**

Casey L's Pick

Phantasy Star was years ahead of its time when it debuted in 1988, and easily stood as the best RPG of the 8-bit era. Looking back on it now, it's surprising how fresh it still feels; elements like a female protagonist, controllable vehicles, and a quest that spans multiple planets have rarely appeared in the decades since. Like most RPGs of the era, Phantasy Star does feel a little clumsy by modern standards. Battles are too frequent, you walk too slowly, and there are occasional hiccups in the scenario that will leave you confounded about what to do next. But the game's bright graphics and soundtrack still provide plenty of charm, and its lengthy first-person dungeons will be a delight for anyone hardcore enough to break out a pad of graph paper.

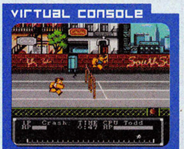
Recommended

FAMILY PLAYTIME
ULTIMATE PUZZLE GAMES Sudoku Edition
SOLITAIRE OVERLOAD
ULTIMATE CARD GAMES
ULTIMATE BRAIN GAMES
ULTIMATE PUZZLE GAMES
EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
AVAILABLE AT
BEST BUY
GameStop
amazon.com
TOYS R US
TELEGAMES®
Web site: www.telegames.com

EVALUATION STATION

WiiWare
Virtual Console
DSiWare

VIRTUAL CONSOLE



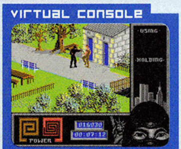
CRASH 'N THE BOYS: STREET CHALLENGE

PLATFORM: **NES**
PUBLISHER: **AKSYS GAMES/TECHNOS**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1992**

This Track & Field-style sports game is actually a spin-off of NES classic River City Ransom. As such, the events take inspiration from River City Ransom's brawler nature. Although the premise is fun, the controls can be unresponsive, making some events more frustrating than they need be. There are also only five events to choose from, so it won't be long before you tire of the competition. **—PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

VIRTUAL CONSOLE



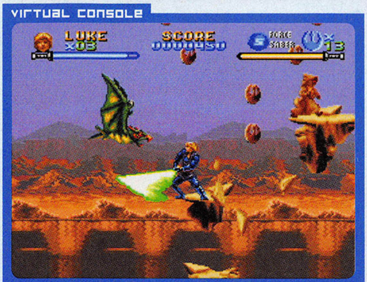
LAST NINJA 2

PLATFORM: **COMMODORE 64**
PUBLISHER: **COMMODORE GAMING/ ACTIVISION**
GENRE: **ADVENTURE**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1988**

It's not hard to see why Last Ninja 2 was so popular back in the day—its blend of action and puzzles make it a much deeper game than many others of its time. Unfortunately, the years have not been especially kind to this noble warrior. The game looks nice for its age and the soundtrack is pretty awesome, but the unintuitive controls severely hinder the gameplay. The combat is especially awkward and sluggish. **—PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

VIRTUAL CONSOLE



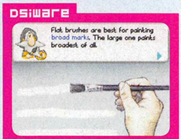
SUPER RETURN OF THE JEDI

PLATFORM: **SUPER NES** · PUBLISHER: **LUCASARTS/JVC**
GENRE: **ACTION** · ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1994**

If you purchase only one title from the Super Star Wars trilogy on Virtual Console you should go with the original, but Super Return of the Jedi is a pretty stellar game in its own right. The level design isn't as good as that of its predecessors, and the challenge is even greater, but it's nontheless a lot of fun to blast your way through an amped-up version of the Rebel Alliance's climactic battle against the Empire. A broader selection of characters (including Leia and Wicket) adds some nice variety to the action-packed 2-D stages, but the 3-D vehicle stages admittedly show their age. **—CHRIS H.**

Recommended

DSiWARE


Flat brushes are best for painting broad marks. The large one paints broadest of all.

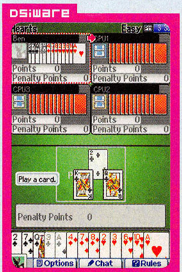
ART ACADEMY: FIRST SEMESTER

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **CREATIVITY**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **800**

Here's a paint program that doesn't behave like a typical paint program. The various tools at your disposal function like their real-life counterparts, resulting in artwork that does a nice job replicating what you would get if you put a brush to a canvas. For novices, a virtual art instructor guides you through a series of fun lessons that teach basic techniques. It's a great way to bring out your inner artist. **—PHIL T.**

Recommended

DSiWARE



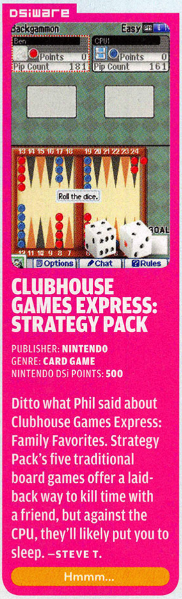
CLUBHOUSE GAMES EXPRESS: FAMILY FAVORITES

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **CARD GAME**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Despite featuring five enjoyable games, this collection is lacking. Multiplayer is limited and the title has no Wi-Fi support. The retail Clubhouse Games (with 40 titles for $20) is a better deal. **—PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



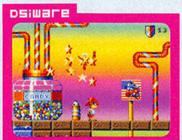
CLUBHOUSE GAMES EXPRESS: STRATEGY PACK

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **CARD GAME**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Ditto what Phil said about Clubhouse Games Express: Family Favorites. Strategy Pack's five traditional board games offer a laid-back way to kill time with a friend, but against the CPU, they'll likely put you to sleep. **—STEVE T.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



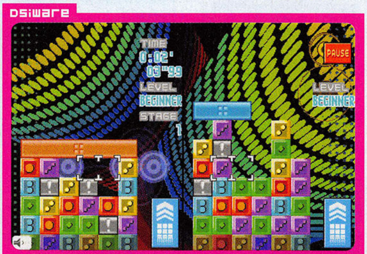
OSCAR IN TOYLAND

PUBLISHER: **VIRTUAL SANDBOX**
GENRE: **PLATFORMER**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **800**

Oscar in Toyland could have been titled Genericman in Genericland. It's not a bad game, but it's wholly uninspired; it feels like objects and enemies were placed in the levels without rhyme or reason, and the collection-based gameplay isn't compelling stuff. Still, the visuals are decent, the controls do the job, and there are plenty of levels to satisfy a need for cheap on-the-go platforming. **—CHRIS H.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



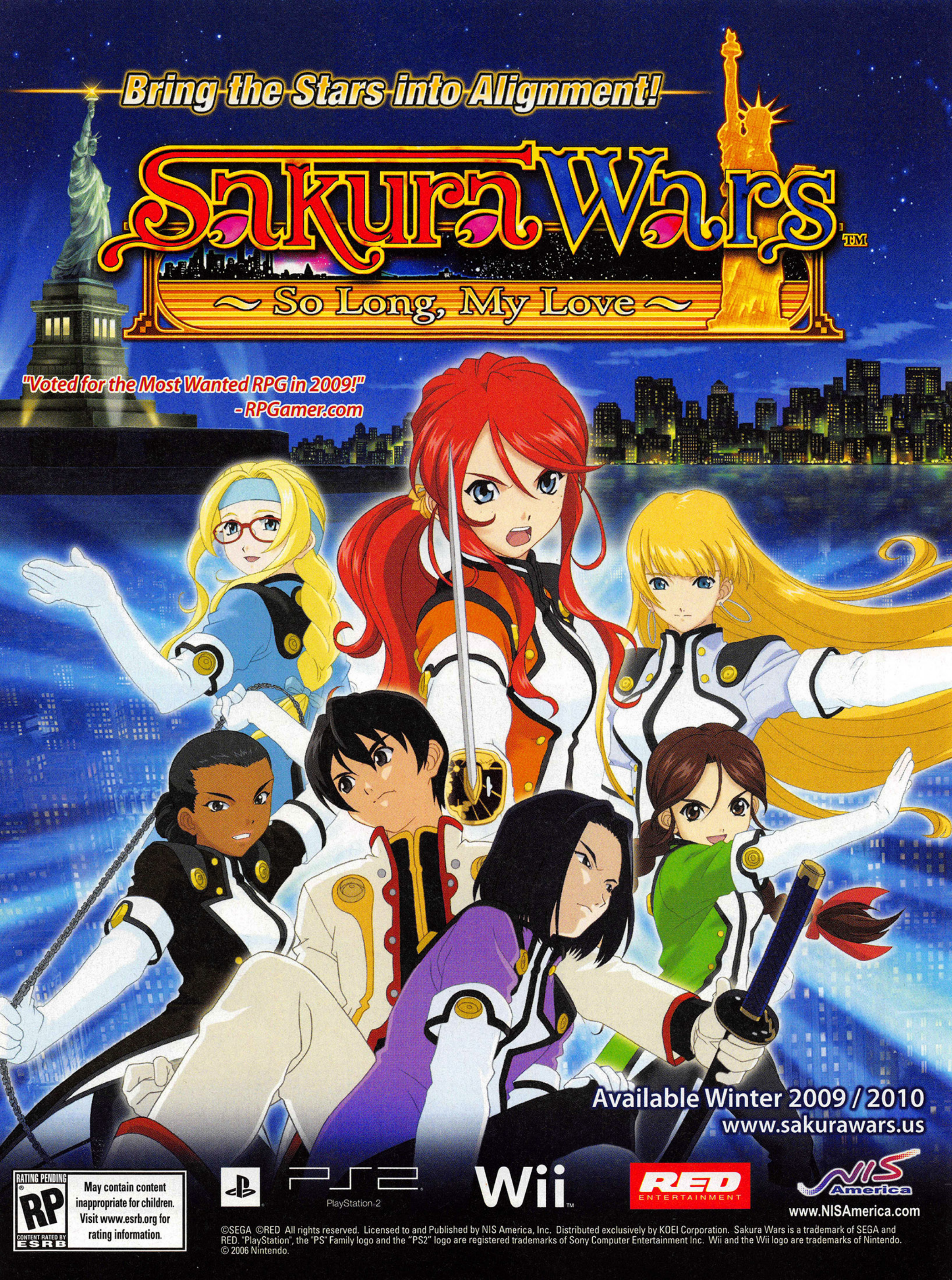
PUZZLE LEAGUE EXPRESS

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** · GENRE: **PUZZLE** · NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Phil T's Pick

Puzzle League has been around for a while now, and whether it's called Tetris Attack or covered in Pokémon, it's always been one of the finest puzzle games out there. The concept (swap blocks and match colors) is simple, but the gameplay, which rewards quick reflexes and multiple combos, is surprisingly deep and tremendous fun. This abbreviated version of the previously released Planet Puzzle League lacks the full version's multiplayer mode, but its four single-player modes provide plenty of challenge if you're itching for some solo puzzling.

Recommended


Bring the Stars into Alignment!
Sakura Wars™
~ So Long, My Love ~
"Voted for the Most Wanted RPG in 2009!"
- RPGamer.com
Available Winter 2009 / 2010
www.sakurawars.us
PS2
PlayStation 2
Wii™
RED ENTERTAINMENT
NIS America
www.NISAmerica.com

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

May contain content inappropriate for children. Visit www.esrb.org for rating information.

©SEGA ©RED All rights reserved. Licensed to and Published by NIS America, Inc. Distributed exclusively by KOEI Corporation. Sakura Wars is a trademark of SEGA and RED. "PlayStation", the "PS" Family logo and the "PS2" logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

THIS MONTH IN PREVIEWS

ASSASSIN'S CREED II: DISCOVERY PG. 40
DAWN OF HEROES PG. 40
F1 2009 PG. 43
FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES: THE CRYSTAL BEARERS PG. 32
JAMBO! SAFARI PG. 43
NO MORE HEROES 2: DESPERATE STRUGGLE PG. 34
RED STEEL 2 PG. 37
SHIREN THE WANDERER PG. 38
SIN AND PUNISHMENT 2 PG. 36
SUPER MONKEY BALL: STEP & ROLL PG. 42

Off the Beaten Path

> FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES: THE CRYSTAL BEARERS

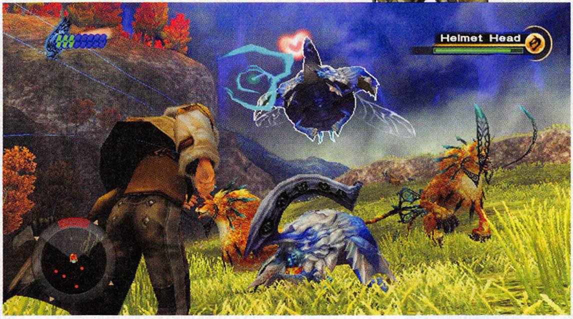
PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **SQUARE ENIX**
DEVELOPER: **SQUARE ENIX** • RELEASE: **DECEMBER 2009**

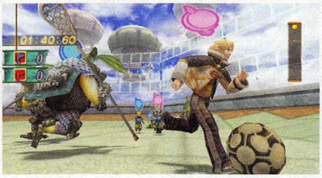
After a long and tumultuous development cycle, The Crystal Bearers is almost upon us. We recently had an opportunity to play through the first few hours of the game, and if they're any indication of the adventure as a whole, the wait will have been well worthwhile. This is the most daringly original title to ever bear (no pun intended) the Final Fantasy moniker.

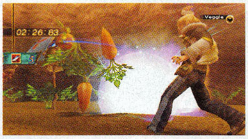
Far more action-adventure than RPG, the game stars a cocksure mercenary named Layle who commands the power of telekinesis. To utilize his gift, you simply point the Wii Remote controller at the desired target, hold the B Button to lock on, then flick the remote. This serves as the core mechanic throughout, and its applications are impressively varied. We've already used it to, among other things, climb, surf, swipe letters, catch fish, navigate platforms, and battle monsters.

Like the rest of the game, combat in The Crystal Bearers is quite unorthodox. Since Layle doesn't carry a weapon, you'll have to rely solely on his telekinesis and your wits. You can always pick up a rock and hurl it at the nearest foe, but there are usually far more effective ways to dispatch a particular opponent; you just have to discover them. If you throw a Roller Bug into another of its ilk, for instance, the two will fuse together into a helpless ball. Or, after ripping the leaves off a Bloomer, you can hold the man-sized plant overhead and use its exposed root like a drill. The game also features a reactive AI system, which causes every living thing to respond to your actions (as well as those of other creatures) in unique ways. This can come in handy not only during battle, but also for uncovering secrets. After we angered an otherwise peaceful ram, for example, he charged into the side of a mountain and exposed a hidden cave.

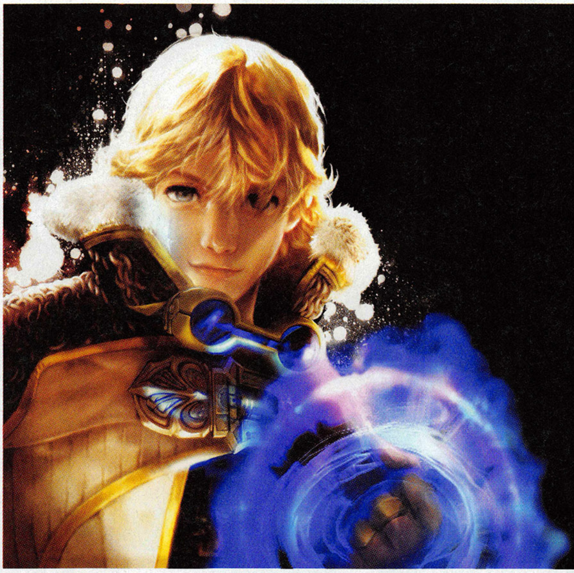
As unconventional as it is, The Crystal Bearers *feels* like a full-fledged Final Fantasy—far more so than any previous Crystal Chronicles title. It's big, ambitious, story-driven, and lavishly produced. Thank goodness the wait is almost over. —STEVE T.

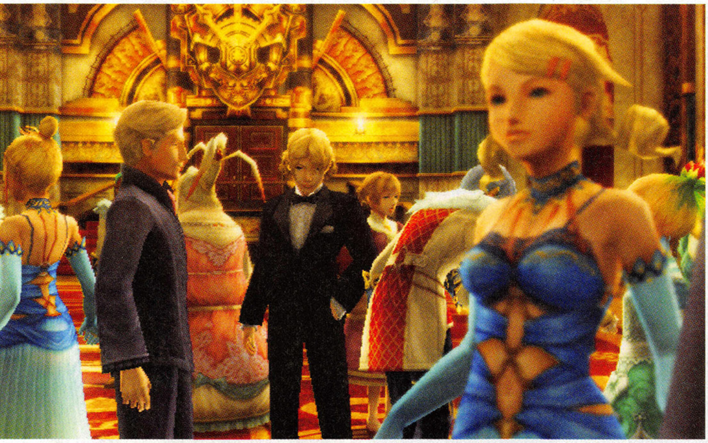


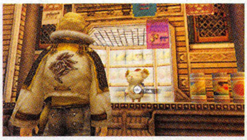




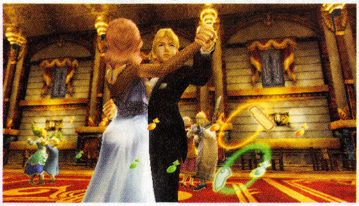
[Left] A soccer ball and lacrosse racquets? Someone didn't pay attention in phys ed.







Crazy Bones



Got Materials
You found a Yo-yo!

[Above] Among the game's many diversions: fully playable ballroom dancing. Layle cleans up pretty well.

Moogle Mail
Talk

Slay Ride

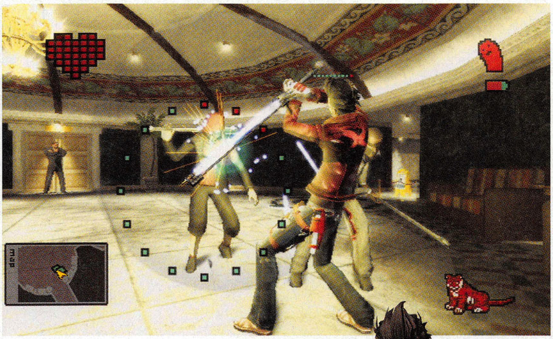
>NO MORE HEROES 2: DESPERATE STRUGGLE

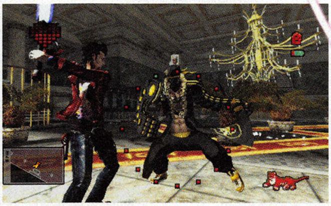
PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **GRASSHOPPER MANUFACTURE**
RELEASE: **JANUARY 2010**

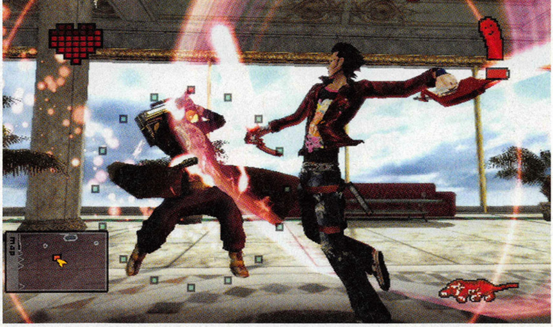
Travis Touchdown is an angry man. Someone has killed his best friend, so the pro wrestling-obsessed otaku sets out on a mission of revenge across the Californian city of Santa Destroy. In order to do that, though, Travis has to rejoin the United Assassins Association and fight his way from 51st to number one. And so begins the sequel to gamesmith Suda51's excellent Mature-rated No More Heroes, No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle.

We played a fairly brief demo of Desperate Struggle, which was focused primarily on combat. (This is exciting, of course, since it's our first time playing the title, but we also wanted to try the 8-bit-style side-job minigames, such as coconut collecting.) If you've played the first No More Heroes, you should know how to play this one: use the Control Stick to move, A to slash, B to kick, Z to guard and lock on to enemies, and the Control Pad to dodge. You can change Travis's stance by pointing the Wii Remote controller up or down (high or low, respectively) and recharge his beam katana by pressing 1 and shaking the Wii Remote. (The latter is humorous yet a little lewd; those who have played the original game know what we mean.) A new addition to the control scheme is that you can press the 2 Button to switch weapons; in the demo we played, Travis could swap between brandishing a single beam katana and wielding two of them at once. (Employing two beam katanas makes combat feel a bit faster than when using one.) Once you've softened up an enemy, you can finish him off by gesturing in the appropriate direction with the Wii Remote (and the Nunchuk controller as well when Travis performs a pro wrestling takedown).

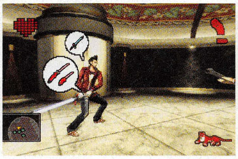
You have to mix it up some when fighting even random baddies, as they've become a touch smarter and more aggressive since the last game. They're more inclined to attack in groups instead of one at a time, for example, and they generally seem to do a better job of blocking your strikes. The demo had us battling through two areas full of a good variety of opponents (some knifemen, a couple of gunmen) before facing off against Nathan Copeland, a hip-hop-influenced boss who speaks with an Irish accent. Winning the bout between Travis and Nathan is a matter of recognizing Nathan's attack patterns (it's a good idea to run when his robotic arms transform into a missile-launching boom box) and avoiding the growing number of environmental hazards: at first, a giant chandelier repeatedly rises and falls, crushing anyone underneath it; as the skirmish progresses, guns appear from the mouths of many lion-head statues in the room; and finally, the carpets on the ground become conveyer belts. —JUSTIN C.







[Below] You're vulnerable when you're switching weapons, so be careful.



AVAILABLE NOW.
THE WHITE COLLECTION
Red Bull
White
Shaun White

COMPETE AGAINST THE WORLD!

Shaun White SNOWBOARDING

World Stage

Take on the world's top boarders.

Big Air, Boardercross, Slopestyle — plus tons more!

Multiplayer mode:
Compete against your friends!

Grind and Carve with the Wii Balance Board™.

www.shaunwhitegame.com

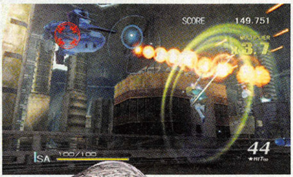
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Comic Mischief
Mild Lyrics

© 2009 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Ubisoft, Ubi.com, and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries. Shaun White is used under license from Shaun White and Shaun White Enterprises, Inc. Wii, the Wii logo, Wii MotionPlus and Wii Balance Board are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

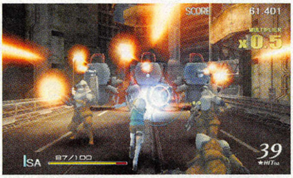
Wii Balance Board sold separately with Wii Fit.

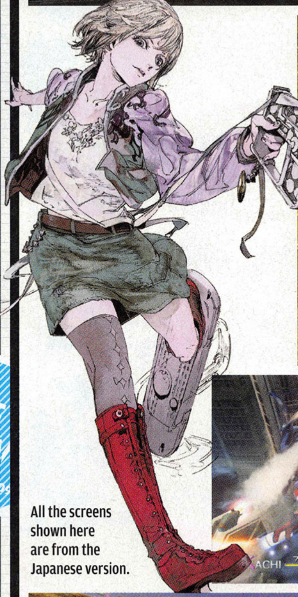
Wii™

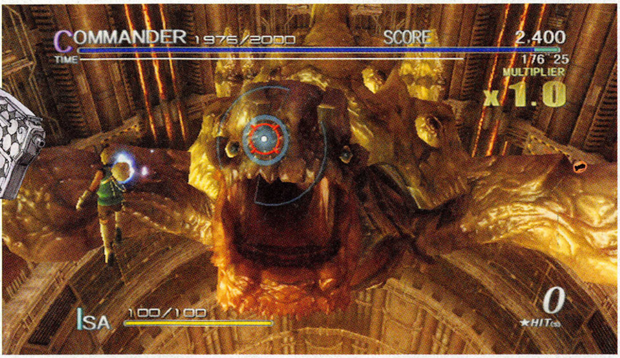
UBISOFT®

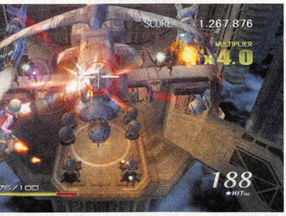

SCORE 149,751
MULTIPLIER
x3.7
ISA 100/100
44
★HIT(S)

このままこの地球から脱出できるといいんだが...

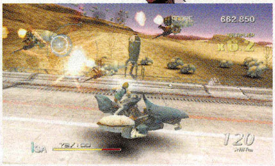

SCORE 61,401
MULTIPLIER
x0.5
ISA 87/100
39
★HIT(S)



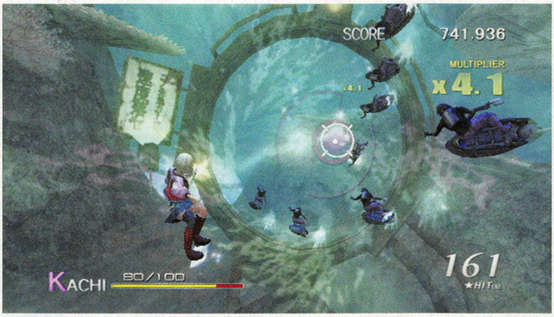

COMMANDER 1976/2000
TIME
SCORE 2,400
1'76"25
MULTIPLIER
x1.0
ISA 100/100
0
★HIT(S)


SCORE 1,267,876
MULTIPLIER
x4.0
KACHI 75/100
188
★HIT(S)

All the screens shown here are from the Japanese version.


662,850
ISA
120

アタシに勝てたらの話だけどね。

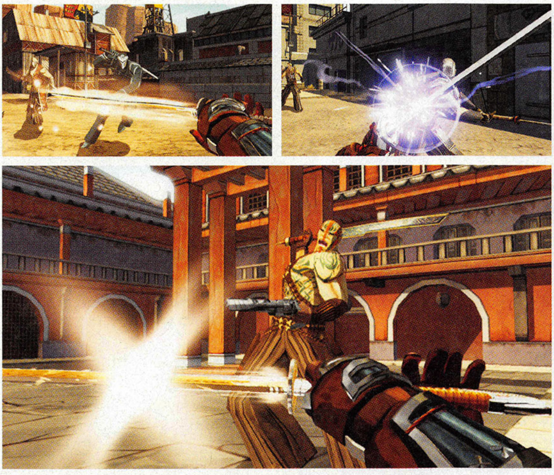

SCORE 741,936
MULTIPLIER
x4.1
x4.1
KACHI 80/100
161
★HIT(S)

Punish or be Punished

>SIN AND PUNISHMENT 2

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **TREASURE** • RELEASE: **Q1 2010**

Since we just got our hands on new screenshots from Japan, we figured now was an ideal time to take another look at Sin and Punishment 2, Treasure's insanely intense action game for the Wii console. In case you missed our coverage of the game during E3, here's the scoop: Sin and Punishment 2 is all about taking down legions of bad guys and looking good doing it. By aiming with the Wii Remote and holding down the B Button, you can dispatch distant foes with a constant stream of firepower, but when the bad guys try to get up close and personal you can take them down by tapping B to unleash a quick swing of your sword. The game features two playable characters: Isa, the boy, is the stronger of the two, whereas Kachi, the girl, has advanced lock-on capabilities that let her take out multiple enemies with her rocket launcher. But no matter which of the two you choose, you'll run, dodge, and fly through the sky via jetpack or hoverboard to avoid the relentless enemy assault. Particularly impressive are the massive bosses—such as a giant mutant rooster and a freakish gargantuan turtle—that promise to push your skills to the limits. The game's early-2010 release can't come soon enough. —**CHRIS H.**



[Above] Don't expect a fair fight when facing Payne. He *is* a bad guy, after all....

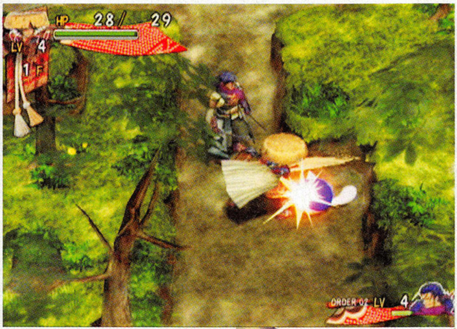
Here Comes the Payne

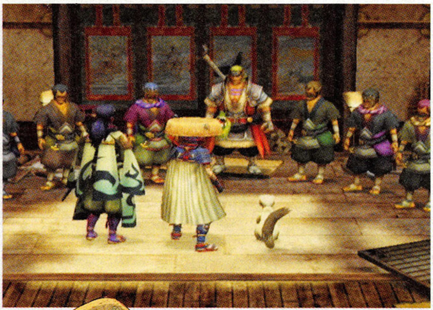
>RED STEEL 2

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT PARIS** • RELEASE: **Q1 2010**

In the opening sequence of Red Steel 2, a mysterious stranger (you) is greeted by a gang of samurai bikers known as the Jackals—and by greeted, we mean tied up and dragged behind a speeding motorcycle driven by the Jackals' tattooed leader, Payne. You make it out alive, of course, and set out on a mission of revenge. This quest leads you to the mayor's expansive, Japanese-style mansion, in which Payne has taken up residence. The actual fight against Payne takes place in a courtyard, giving you plenty of room to dodge his attacks. It's something you'll be doing a lot, as Payne is essentially your doppelganger: like you, he wields a gun and a sword, and he's proficient with both. This means it's best to avoid his strikes and attack his unprotected back; unfortunately, if you don't get out of the way in time, he can lift you into the air with his sword or knee you in the face. —**JUSTIN C.**

Discover a Magical World with your ocarina
Enter Our Ocarina Competition to Win Cash and Prizes!
STL Ocarina
www.stlocarina.com
1-866-487-3814





Survivor: Japan

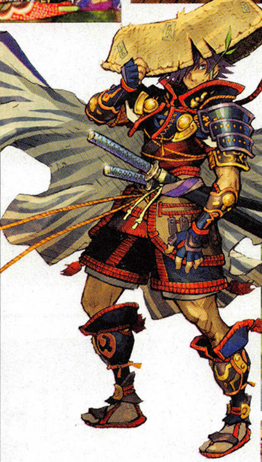
>SHIREN THE WANDERER

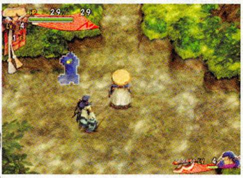
PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **ATLUS**
DEVELOPER: **CHUNSOFT** • RELEASE: **SPRING 2010**

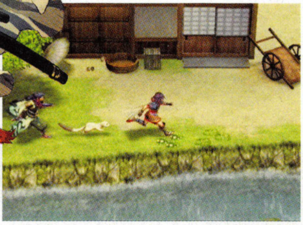
Those who have played Mystery Dungeon: Shiren the Wanderer for the Nintendo DS handheld know all too well that death comes often and quickly to the roving monster-slayer. Survival is tricky, if not impossible at times, as Shiren attempts to advance from one creepy creature-infested dungeon to the next, fighting off hunger, beasts, and falling rocks. This first Wii title has jumped publishers since the DS version, but developer Chunsoft (of Pokémon Mystery Dungeon fame) remains at the helm, and uncompromising challenges remain at the forefront. Shiren's adventures, predictably, look better than ever, with vibrant 3-D graphics and smooth character animation. Though the road ahead has a lot of bumps and bends, an adjustable control scheme allows for even the greenest adventurer to give it a go. There are two remote-only configurations, and options to add the Nunchuk or use a Classic Controller.

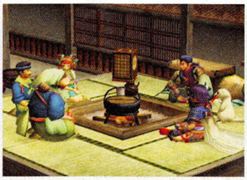
As always, battle is turn-based, and monsters approach at your pace. If you pause, the creatures in your vicinity will freeze in their tracks, waiting for you to make your next move. The style may seem stilted, but it emphasizes strategy over reflexive action. And it's good to have a strategy when facing large groups of enemies or engaging in show-stopping boss battles. It's also useful to pick up each dungeon's numerous scattered items and increase their power at designated points.

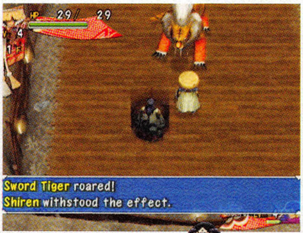
The story has Shiren and talking varmint Koppa exploring Karakui Mansion, which is more treasure-filled dungeon than residence, and encountering a strange maiden. Visions of the past lead to the discovery of secrets in the present. The North American version will include mansion sections that are available only by download in the Japanese game. —**GEORGE S.**



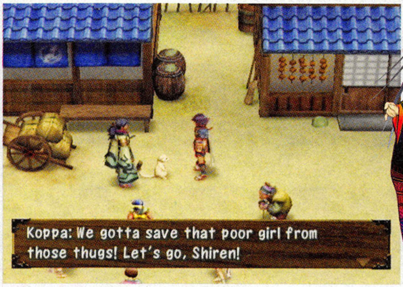




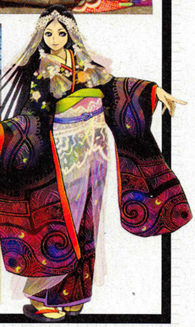




Sword Tiger roared!
Shiren withstood the effect.



Koppa: We gotta save that poor girl from those thugs! Let's go, Shiren!



NINTENDO DS™

A Witch's Tale™

It's a Nightmare Come True...

A Witch's Tale™

I'm Liddell!
I'm gonna be the best
friggin' witch ever!

Available Now!!

Atelier Annie™
Alchemists of Sera Island

Resort to Alchemy!

Available Now!!

EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Blood
Language
Mild Fantasy Violence
Mild Language
Suggestive Themes

日本一 SOFTWARE

NIS America

For more information, please visit
www.NISAmerica.com
www.aWitchTale.com

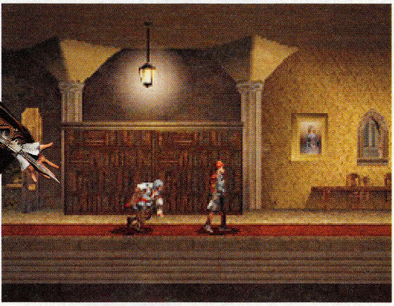
©2009 NIPPON ICHI SOFTWARE INC. / HITMAKER, INC. ©GUST CO., LTD. 2008-2009. All rights reserved. Licensed to and Published by NIS America, Inc. Distributed exclusively by KOEI Corporation. A Witch's Tale is a trademark of NIPPON ICHI SOFTWARE INC. Atelier Annie is a trademark of GUST CO., LTD. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2004 Nintendo.

Renaissance Man

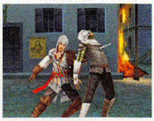
>ASSASSIN'S CREED II: DISCOVERY

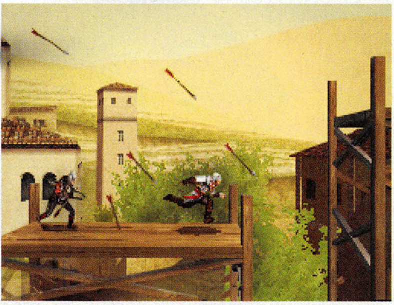
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS** • PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **GRIPTONITE GAMES**
RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2009**

Like its stealthy protagonist, Assassin's Creed II: Discovery seemingly came from out of nowhere. Set to strike this November, the just-announced 2.5-D platformer takes place in Renaissance-era Spain and expands on the storyline for the upcoming Xbox 360/PlayStation 3 game. Levels are divided into three basic types: Normal simply involves reaching your destination by any means necessary, Stealth forces you to restart if you're spotted three times, and Chase has you flee an area as quickly as possible while dodging arrows and evading guards. What we've played thus far was pretty satisfying—assassin Ezio is as nimble as an acrobat, and performing stealth kills is a breeze. As in the original console game, face-to-face combat feels a bit primitive and tends to grind things to a halt, but the whole point is to avoid it in the first place. —**STEVE T.**



[Right] Discovery's 3-D vistas look even better in motion. [Below] Ezio gets to the heart of the matter.



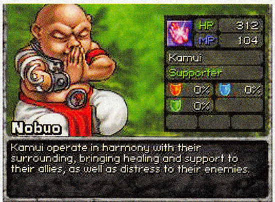


Dawn of the Deed

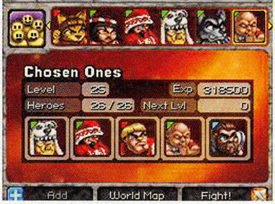
>DAWN OF HEROES

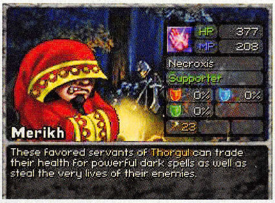
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS** • PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **WICKED STUDIO** • RELEASE: **DECEMBER 2009**

There's something funny about Majesco's upcoming turn-based strategy-RPG. With a sharp wit and sharper swords, both brandished by caricature-cute brawlers, the game takes us to the disjointed Kingdom of Brinthule. Gameplay is typical of DS tactical fighters. You tap to move fighters into position, then tap again to select attacks. Victory yields items (of which there are hundreds), gold, and experience. All team members level up simultaneously and new members join at the team's experience level to keep everything balanced. All is not even among fighter abilities, however. Some of the 25 playable classes specialize in defense and spells that disarm opponents. Others take a more aggressive brawling approach. The story's 50 missions branch out from a hub camp where you can save your progress and initiate multiplayer battles. If a hero perishes, he'll be back in fighting shape for the next challenge. That's not the way a hardcore RPG plays it, but it just might make for hardcore fun. —**GEORGE S.**

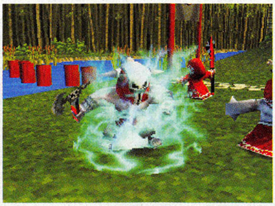


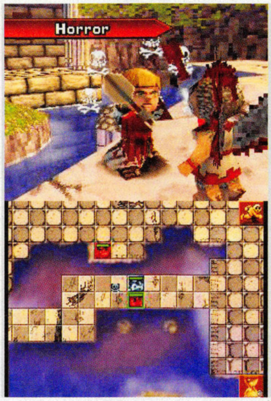
Kamui operate in harmony with their surrounding, bringing healing and support to their allies, as well as distress to their enemies.





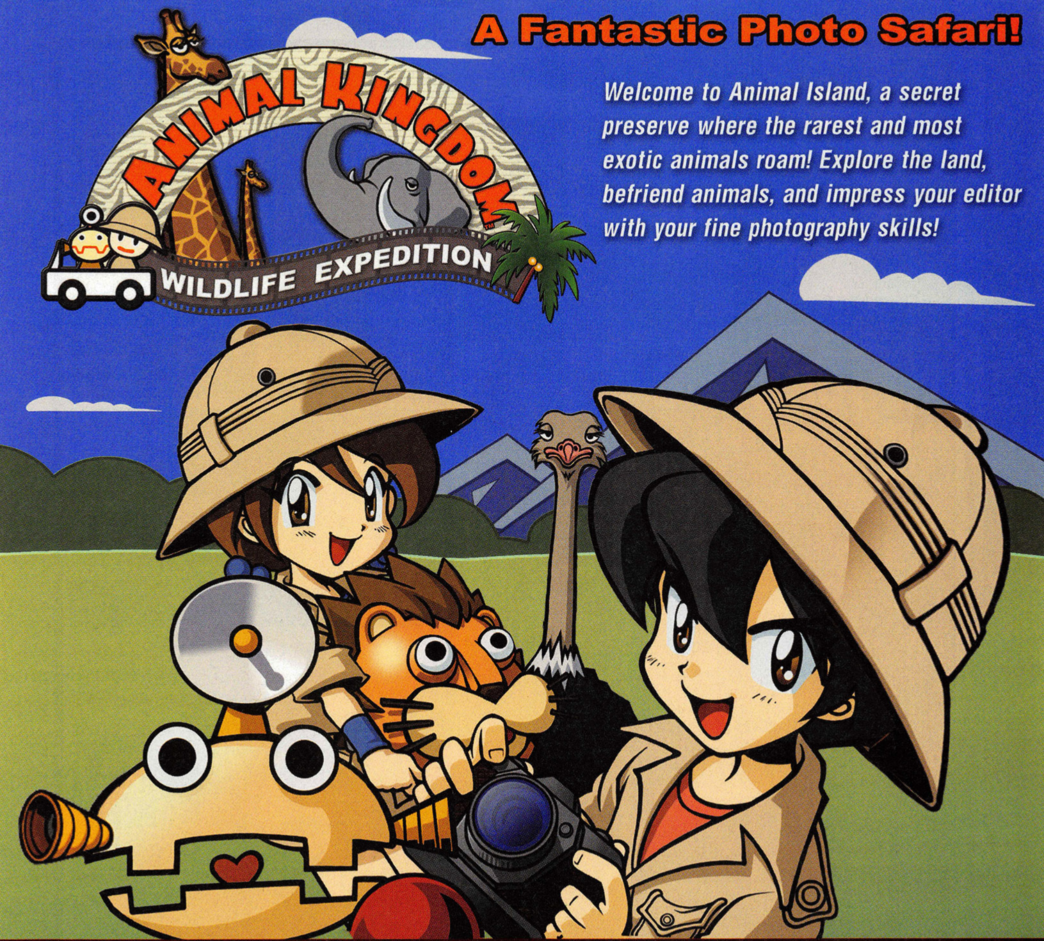
These favored servants of Thorgul can trade their health for powerful dark spells as well as steal the very lives of their enemies.

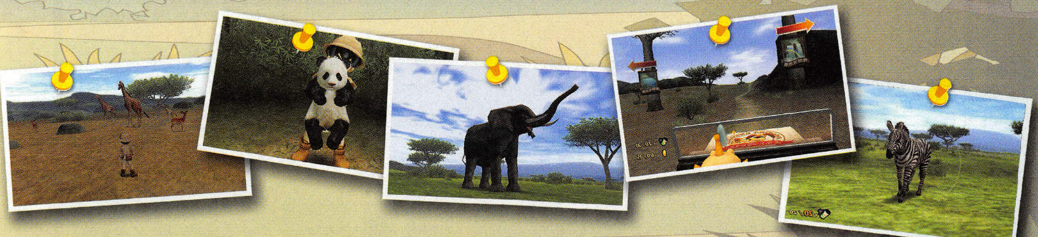




A Fantastic Photo Safari!

Welcome to Animal Island, a secret preserve where the rarest and most exotic animals roam! Explore the land, befriend animals, and impress your editor with your fine photography skills!





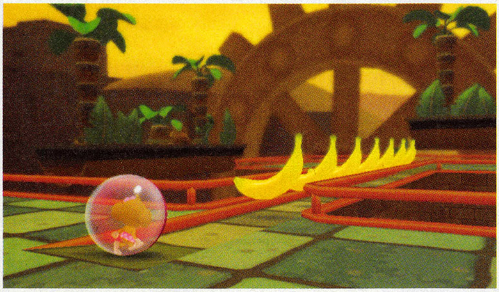
EVERYONE
E
Mild Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

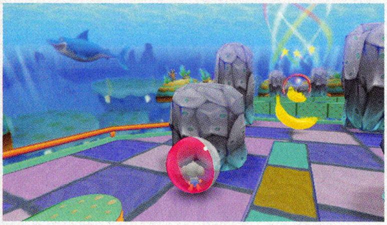
Wii™

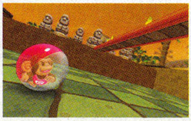
NATSUME®
Serious Fun®

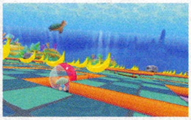
www.natsume.com

Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. ©2006 Nintendo. Natsume and Serious Fun are registered trademarks of Natsume Inc. Animal Kingdom: Wildlife Expedition is a trademark of Natsume Inc. ©2009 Natsume Inc. ©2009 Success Corporation. ©2009 Tokyo Broadcasting System, Inc. All Rights Reserved. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.









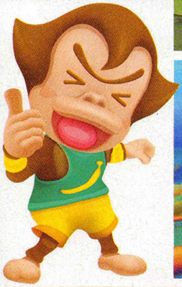
Step on Board

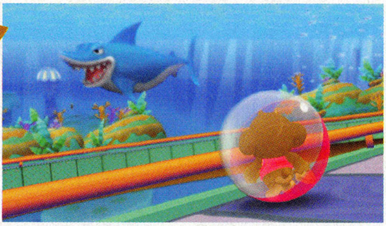
>SUPER MONKEY BALL: STEP & ROLL

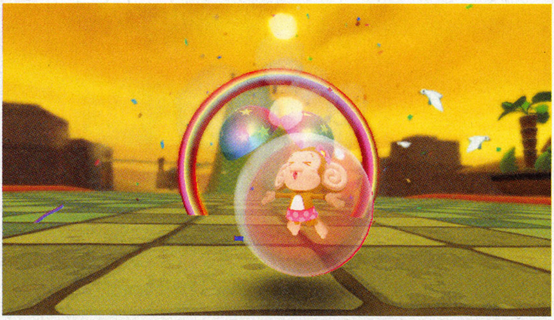
PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SEGA** • RELEASE: **SPRING 2010**

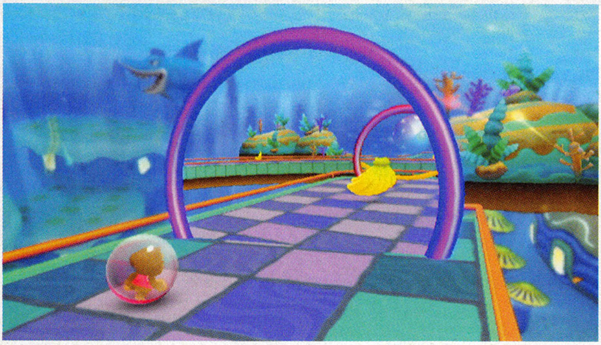
The Super Monkey Ball games have a pretty simple premise: you get a monkey in a giant ball to its goal by moving the playing field. The latest, Step & Roll, tweaks the formula by adding support for the Wii Balance Board accessory—just shift your weight on the board to tilt the playing field accordingly. As straightforward as this sounds, though, I did encounter some difficulties during my feet-on time with the game, mainly because the controls feel less precise than using the Wii-Remote-and-Nunchuk combination (which is also supported, thankfully). But perhaps that has more to do with my own lack of coordination than anything else. Fortunately, the early levels have plenty of guardrails to prevent you from falling into oblivion. Don't think that balance board support is the game's only new feature, however. In addition to new minigames, Step & Roll also has cooperative play: while one player maneuvers the monkey, another points at the screen with a Wii Remote and blasts the barriers in the primate's path.

—JUSTIN C.









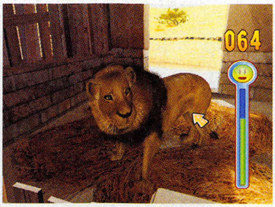
[Left] Even something as simple as going straight can be a challenge if you don't have good balance.

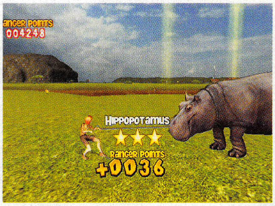
Running Wild

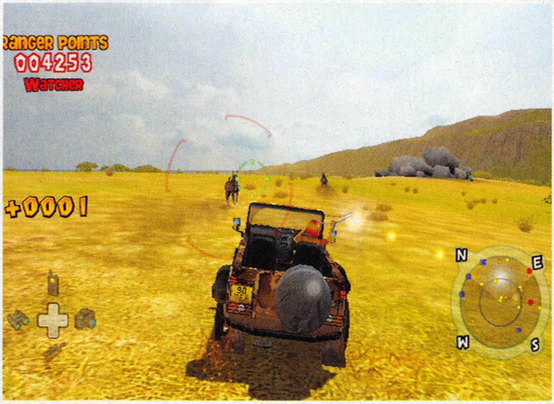
> JAMBO! SAFARI

PLATFORM: **Wii (ALSO ON DS)** • PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **FULL FAT** • RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2009**

Safari-themed animal games seem to be the hip new craze on Wii lately, but Sega's Jambo! Safari gives you more freedom than most. You aren't restricted to a track or a set path; instead, you're free to drive your off-road vehicle virtually anywhere in the savannah, which is made up of three regions with three areas each. As a park ranger in training, you'll take care of the wildlife preserve and the animals within it (including giraffes, lions, zebras, rhinos, and more) by completing a variety of tasks—most notably chasing after creatures and spinning and flicking the Wii Remote to toss a lasso and wrangle 'em up, cowboy-style (but only for benevolent research purposes or to give them medical treatment, of course). Other vehicle-based mission types include collecting debris to clean up the park, racing through gates within a time limit, and eliminating poacher traps; outside the vehicle, you'll nurture animals by petting them and providing medicine via the Wii Remote. If you perform your duties well enough, you'll earn badges, trophies, and certificates, and eventually graduate to a full-fledged ranger. **—CHRIS H.**





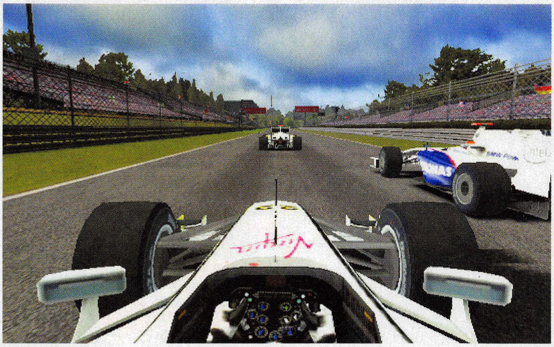


Pit Masters

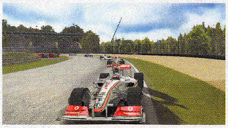
> F1 2009

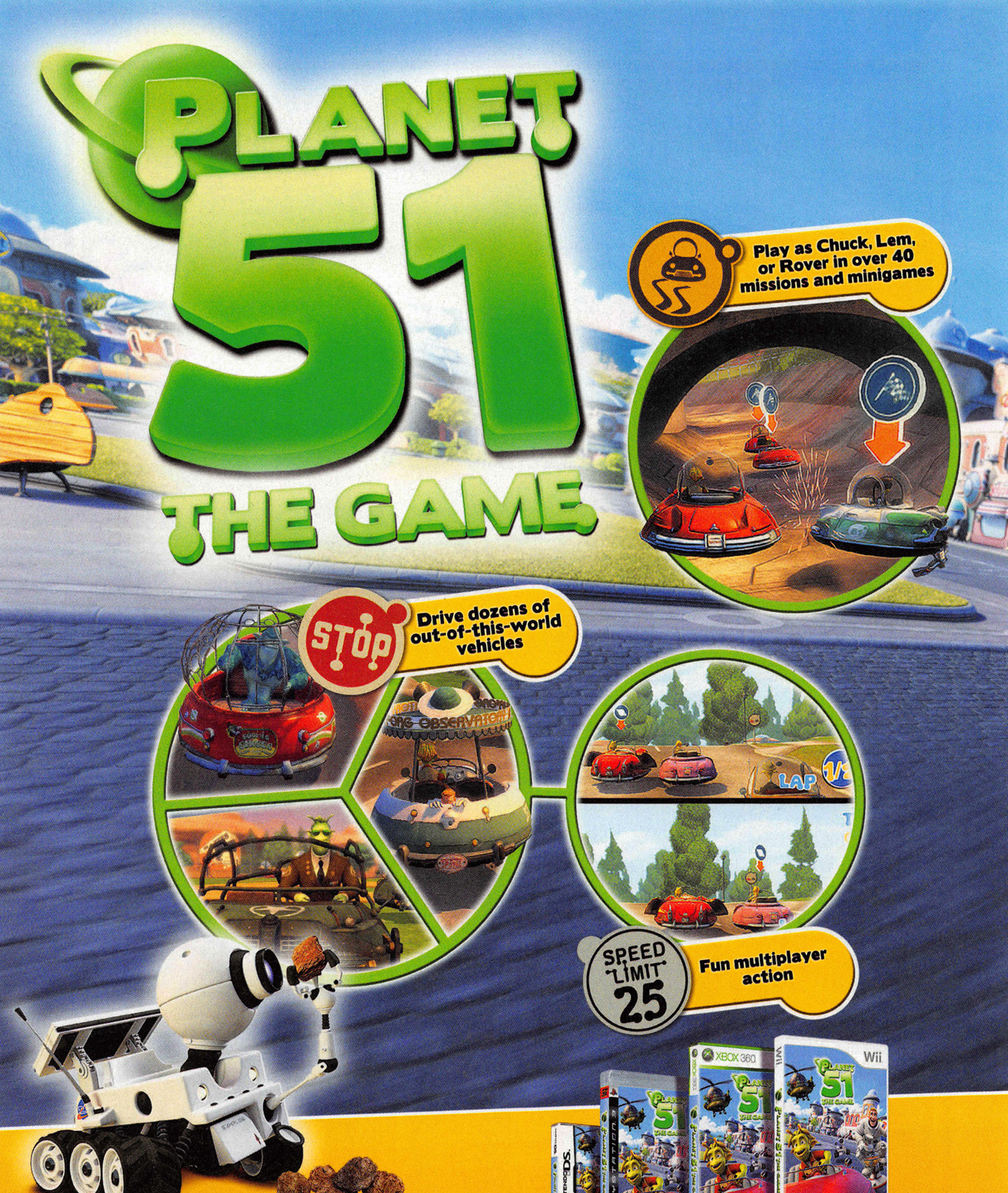
PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **CODEMASTERS**
DEVELOPER: **SUMO DIGITAL** • RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2009**

The United States has NASCAR, but Formula One is the rage worldwide. Codemasters is introducing its speed-driven F1 series to the Wii audience with Formula One Administration licensed drivers (such as Fernando Alonso, Sebastian Vettel and current champ Lewis Hamilton), all 17 of this year's championship races, and official vehicles from the likes of Ferrari, McLaren, and the Brawn GP team. Your choice of five control schemes, including configurations that support the Wii Wheel and Logitech's steering-wheel peripheral, allow you to zip through Abu Dhabi, Singapore, and beyond like a pro. If you're a newcomer, though, don't worry; driver aids even the field so novices and experts alike can enjoy a competitive race. Your vehicle will incur visible damage and handle poorly if you crash, but fortunately your crew will get you back in the race once you reach the pit. Your team aids you in other ways, too, such as communicating with you throughout the race with developing info and advice. Press materials claim that multiplayer split-screen options allow for cooperative play, but we all know only one vehicle can take the checkered flag. **—GEORGE S.**



F1 2009 is realistic, but not overwhelming. If you want, the game will show you the best line through the course, with colored indicators telling you where to brake.




PLANET 51
THE GAME
Play as Chuck, Lem, or Rover in over 40 missions and minigames
STOP
Drive dozens of out-of-this-world vehicles
LAP 1/2
SPEED LIMIT 25
Fun multiplayer action
NINTENDO DS
PLAYSTATION 3
XBOX 360
Wii
PLANET 51 THE GAME
SEGA

EVERYONE ™
E
Cartoon Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

© SEGA. SEGA and the SEGA logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of the SEGA Corporation. © 2009 Ilion Animation Studios, HandMade Films International & A3 Films. All Rights Reserved. © 2009 Pyro Studios S.L. All Rights Reserved. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks and "PS3" is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

XBOX 360. XBOX LIVE

JOIN THE SPACE RACE!

In Stores November 17

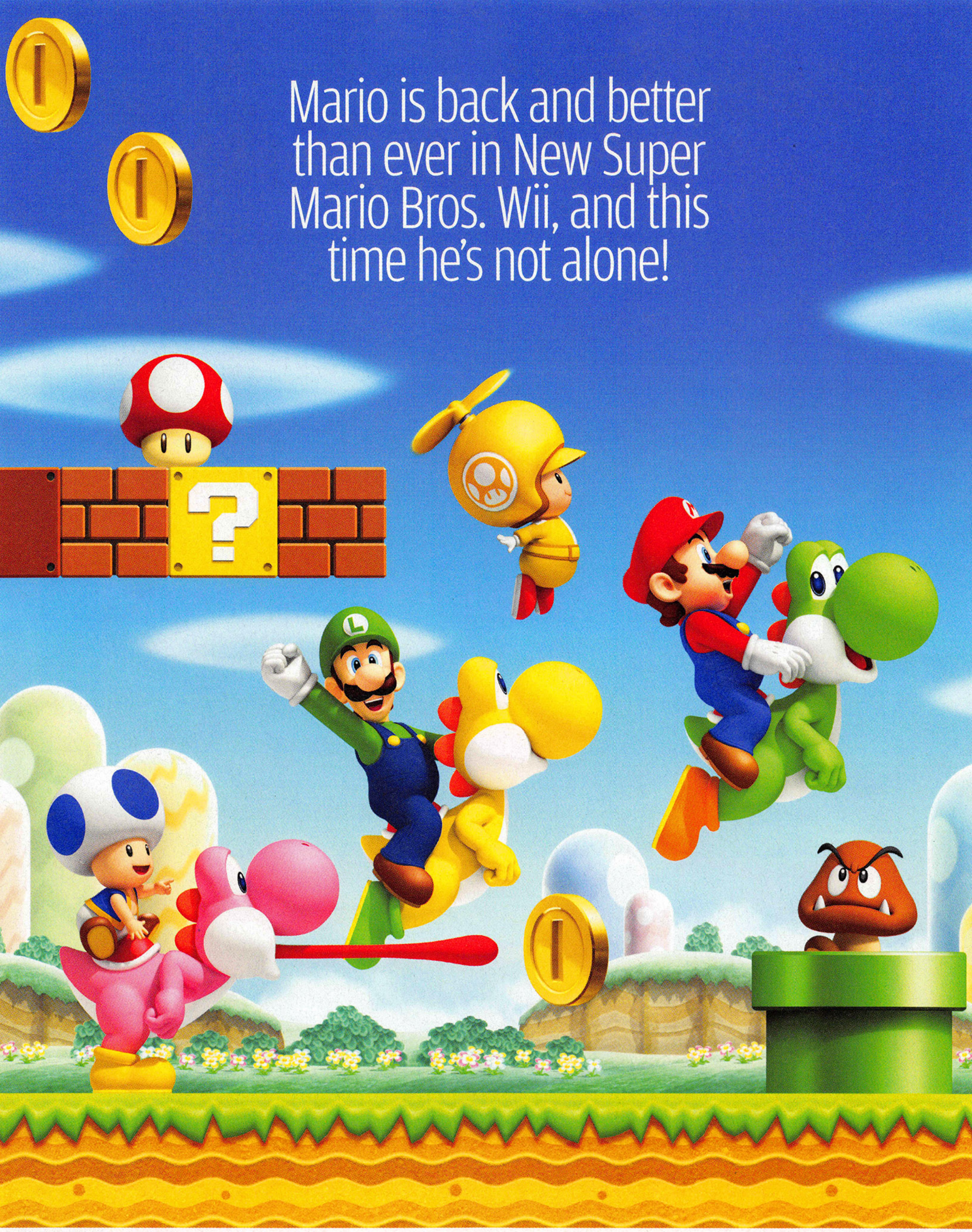
EXPLORE THE WORLD OF THE HIT MOVIE *PLANET 51*

Test your driving skills as you try to outrun the Planet 51 army and help Chuck find his spaceship.

planet51game.com

NINTENDO DS™ Wii™ PS3™ PLAYSTATION 3 ILION ANIMATION STUDIOS PYRO STUDIOS SEGA®

Mario is back and better than ever in New Super Mario Bros. Wii, and this time he's not alone!

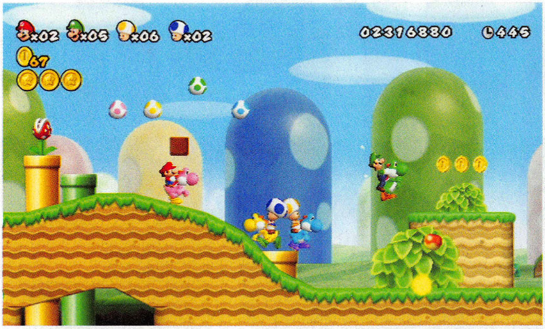


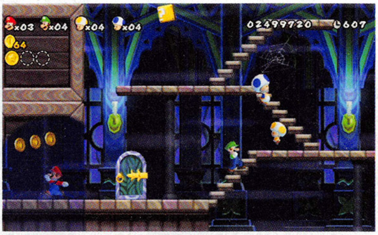
BY CHRIS SLATE

Here-A-WE GO!

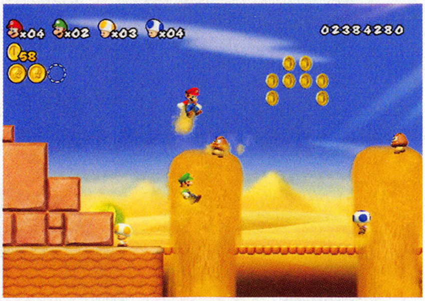
SOMETIMES IT'S EASY to take Nintendo for granted. For example, when New Super Mario Bros. Wii was announced last June, I didn't whoop, whistle, or give a Mario-ish *wa-hoo*, despite the fact that the game looked amazing. Maybe I felt like I knew exactly what to expect after playing the first New Super Mario Bros. on the Nintendo DS handheld, or perhaps the reveal of a great new Mario game was overshadowed by the simultaneous announcement of another great new Mario game, next year's Super Mario Galaxy 2. Or maybe I've simply gotten too used to having fantastic new Nintendo titles sprung on me.

PLATFORM **Wii** | PUBLISHER **NINTENDO** | DEVELOPER **NINTENDO** | RELEASE **NOVEMBER 15, 2009**





[Above] Hidden areas become visible when you walk into them.



B

But when a full-featured, near-final version of New Super Mario Bros. Wii arrived at Nintendo Power headquarters this month, it finally hit me—not only is this a brand-new Mario platformer (which is always cause for celebration), but it's the first 2-D Mario title to hit a console in 18 years, and it marks the first time that multiple players (up to four, in fact) can hop and stomp together through the Mushroom Kingdom. And if all of that can't get a *wa-hoo* out of a Mario fan, he might need to turn in his blue overalls.

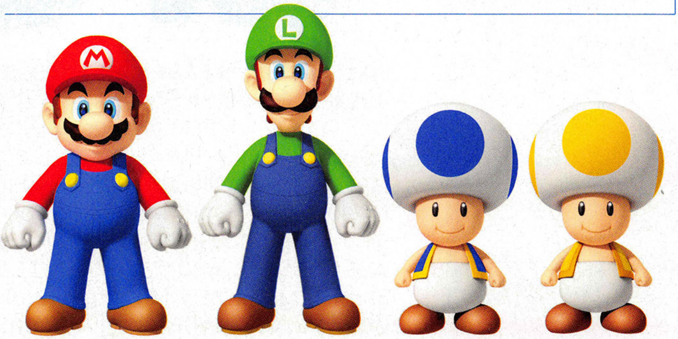
Much has been said about New Super Mario Bros. Wii already—after all, it first surfaced in June and demo versions have appeared at three different trade shows—but after diving into the full game, we discovered that those early reports told us very little. For instance, only about five percent of the game's stages had been shown, and the demos always focused on multiplayer, leaving fans to wonder if the game delivers a series-worthy single-player experience.

Bottom line: the folks at Nintendo have been very crafty with what they've shown so far.

Well, we're not about to show you *everything*—we wouldn't want to spoil the game before you've played it—but over these 10 pages you're going to see more than enough to get your Mario motor running while you wait for the game's release on November 15.

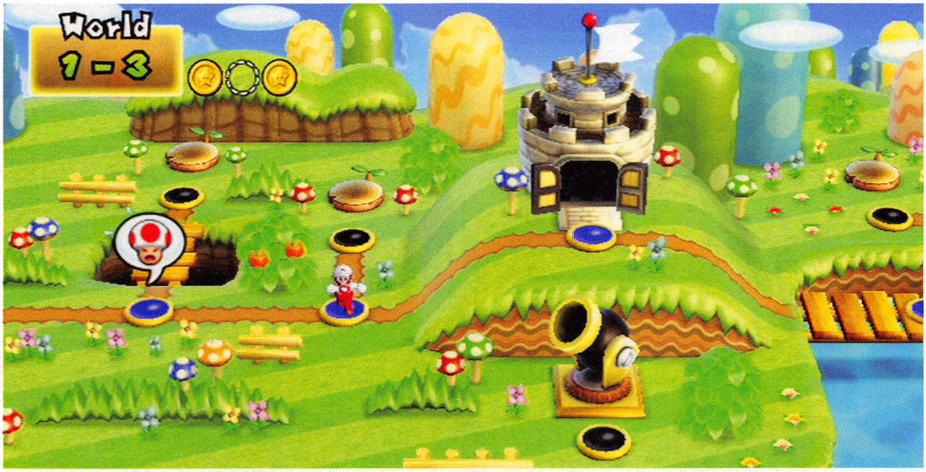
Classic Mario Through and Through

First we want to make something perfectly clear: if the multiplayer-focused previews of the past gave you the idea that New Super Mario Bros. Wii might be some kind of watered-down party game, you couldn't be more wrong. To be honest, we expected that a game built to accommodate four players might feel a little empty when playing solo, or that a lack of teammates would keep us from fully exploring and appreciating each level. It can't have been easy for the game's designers to create stages that seem perfectly suited to any number of players, but the good news is that they've pulled it off. In fact, if someone started a single-player game and handed you the controller, you'd never guess that New Super Mario Bros. Wii is anything other than the latest in the series's long line of top-notch platformers.



Bros. Before Toads

All of the characters play the same, but in our experience, the Toads might as well be named Player 3 and Player 4. Not that they aren't cute, but c'mon—who *wouldn't* pick Mario or Luigi?



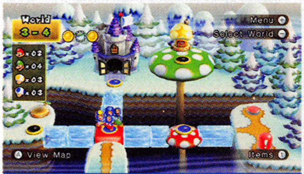
Worlds to Explore

As in every side-scrolling Mario game since Super Mario Bros. 3, the stages in New Super Mario Bros. Wii are organized by maps—there's one for each of the game's eight worlds—which players move across like you would in a board game. A world generally consists of a handful of regular stages, two castles (one at the middle of the map and one at the end), mushroom houses where minigames can be played for power-ups and 1-Ups, and special levels such as a Ghost House. There are secret paths to discover by beating certain levels in different ways, wandering enemies who will trigger special fights, and canons that—if you can find out how to get to them—will warp you to later worlds.

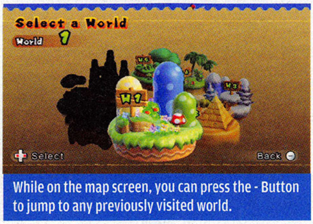
This game's world maps are very much like the ones in New Super Mario Bros. for DS, but they aren't as rectangular and they expand in different directions with more creative layouts. Another improvement over the DS title is the ability to stockpile as many of each type of item as you want by winning them in bonus games. On the map screen you can view your inventory at any time and simultaneously power up all players before trying a level. (However, you can no longer activate a stored item during a stage.)

Similar to the DS game, you're allowed to fully save the game only upon beating a castle stage. However, you can now perform a Quick Save at any time, which can be used once to return to any spot where you left off. As long as you remember to always make a new Quick Save file before ending your game, the effect is the same as if you could save normally wherever you wanted.

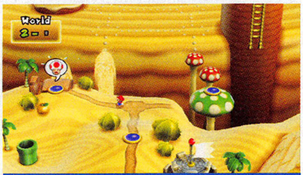
Finally, the map screen is where players can jump in or out of the action. It's all seamless; you never have to back out to the main menu or halt your game in any way.



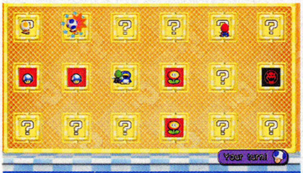
The map for World 3 is spit into two sections and all of its stages share an ice theme.



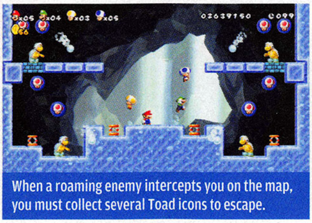
While on the map screen, you can press the - Button to jump to any previously visited world.



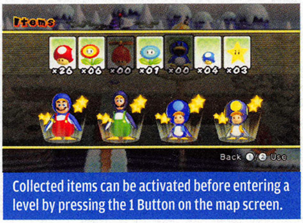
The desert map of World 2 scrolls vertically, with a trap-laden ocean of sand to the north.



Red houses contain a matching game. Flip over two of the same cards and win the item they show.



When a roaming enemy intercepts you on the map, you must collect several Toad icons to escape.

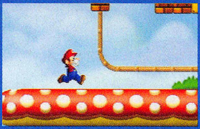


Collected items can be activated before entering a level by pressing the 1 Button on the map screen.

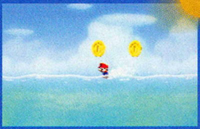
More specifically, the game looks and plays like a direct sequel to New Super Mario Bros. on DS. It features the same back-to-basics approach to the classic side-scrolling Mario games of yesteryear, has similar-feeling controls, updated versions of the same music, the same kind of map screens, and the same style of graphics. Some of the features introduced in the DS title—such as Mega Mario and Shell Mario—have been replaced by new ones. In addition to the returning Super Mushroom, Mini Mushroom, Fire Flower, and Rainbow Star, Mario and company can now snag an Ice Flower to freeze enemies with snowballs—or, even better, pop on a Penguin Suit for snowballs

Power Up!

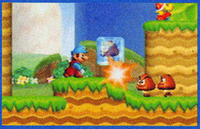
In addition to his usual bag of tricks, Mario has a few new surprises up his sleeve, including two brand-new suits that are among the goofiest gaming get-ups we've ever seen.



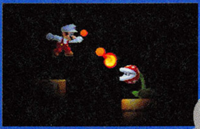
Super Mushroom
As always, scarfing down a red mushroom will turn Mario into the taller, chubbier Super Mario, granting him the ability to smash bricks and take a hit without dying. You can usually find one of these right at the start of a level.



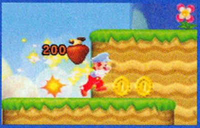
Mini Mushroom
As in New Super Mario Bros. for DS, the Mini Mushroom makes Mario miniature. In this form he can perform high, floaty jumps, run across the surface of water, and enter tiny cracks that are otherwise inaccessible.



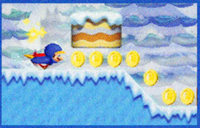
Ice Flower
This great new item allows Mario to freeze his enemies with bouncing snowballs. One frozen, bad guys can be used as platforms (they even float in water) and small enemies can be lifted, carried, and thrown.



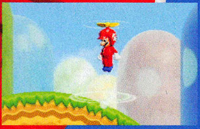
Fire Flower
Throwing fireballs is always one of the handiest abilities to have, although they don't make short work of bosses like they used to. Fireballs can, however, light your way through pitch-dark areas.



Rainbow Star
When invincible, Mario now gives off a cool rainbow effect while knocking enemies aside with just a touch. He also tucks in and flips through the air during jumps, Samus Aran-style.



Penguin Suit
This adorably ridiculous outfit offers the same power as an Ice Flower, plus it allows Mario to belly-slide across the ground like an unstoppable torpedo, and makes swimming much faster and easier.

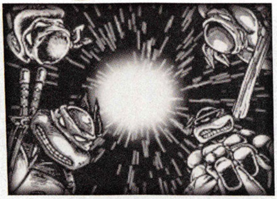


Propeller Suit
With this on, the player can rocket Mario up to very high areas with a quick shake of the Wii Remote. Mario will slowly fall back down to earth, or dive down like a spinning drill if you perform a ground pound. This is just the thing to have during forced-scrolling levels where you must leap along platforms in the sky.

HUNGRY FOR ANOTHER SLICE OF ARCADE-STYLE TURTLES ACTION?

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES™ ARCADE ATTACK

Team up to clean up the streets in Co-Op Mode



Classic arcade gameplay meets vintage comic storytelling

Fight epic boss battles vs. classic enemies

COMING IN NOVEMBER
ONLY FOR THE NINTENDO DS™ SYSTEM

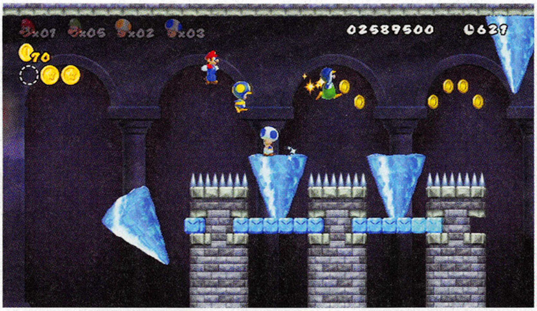
EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Cartoon Violence

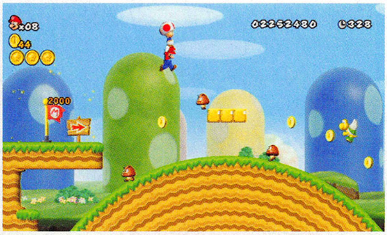
NINTENDO DS™

NINTENDO DS
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES ARCADE ATTACK
UBISOFT

UBISOFT

© 2009 Mirage Studios, Inc. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and TMNT are trademarks of Mirage Studios, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Game © 2009 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Ubisoft, Ubi.com, and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.





[Above] Levels can be replayed with a new goal: get Toad to safety.

plus a sweet belly-slide and enhanced swimming abilities, and use a Propeller Suit to launch high into the air with a shake of the Wii Remote controller.

You can also take a page from Donkey Kong's book and roll found barrels, and you can pick up other special items, such as a POW Block (throwing it smashes everything onscreen), Glow Block (carrying it lights the way through dark areas), and more. And let's not forget Yoshi! After sitting out the last couple of adventures, Mario's trusty steed is back with his full set of fruit-eating, enemy-gobbling, egg-hatching, and flutter-jumping abilities. He can even carry other players' characters in his bulging cheeks, and spit out swallowed projectiles, such as hammers. Unlike in Super Mario World, though, Yoshi can be used only in the levels where he is found; he stays behind when you finish the stage.

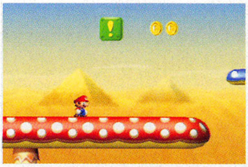
Even without power-ups, there are plenty of classic Mario moves to master. You can perform a double jump, triple jump, wall jump, ground pound, or spin, and can swing on vines, slide down slopes, and climb fences. In addition to picking up knocked-over Koopa shells, you can lift, carry, and toss certain items, frozen foes, and even other players. All of this is handled with a Wii Remote held sideways, just as you would play older 2-D Mario games on Virtual Console, and you can rotate a seesaw platform or a spotlight by tilting the controller. Classic Mario sound effects are emitted through the remote's speaker (such as the one for growing into Super Mario or shrinking back down). And if you prefer the feel of an Analog Stick to the Directional Pad, you can play with the Nunchuk controller plugged in.

It's also worth nothing that this is the first 2-D Mario game that can be played in widescreen, which matters more than you might think. The extra room not only provides four players with more space to run around, but it also gives a single player a better look at what's coming up. The camera automatically zooms in and out depending on the number of people playing and how far apart they are, so you won't notice a lot of empty space when going solo, and multiple players will always have a clear view even when separated (although there is a limit to how far the camera will pull back, and it's possible for slower players to be left for dead offscreen).

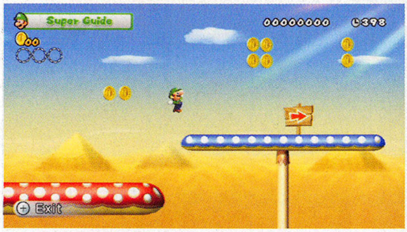
Need a Hand?

The game's new player-assist feature has been the subject of heated debates among some fans, even

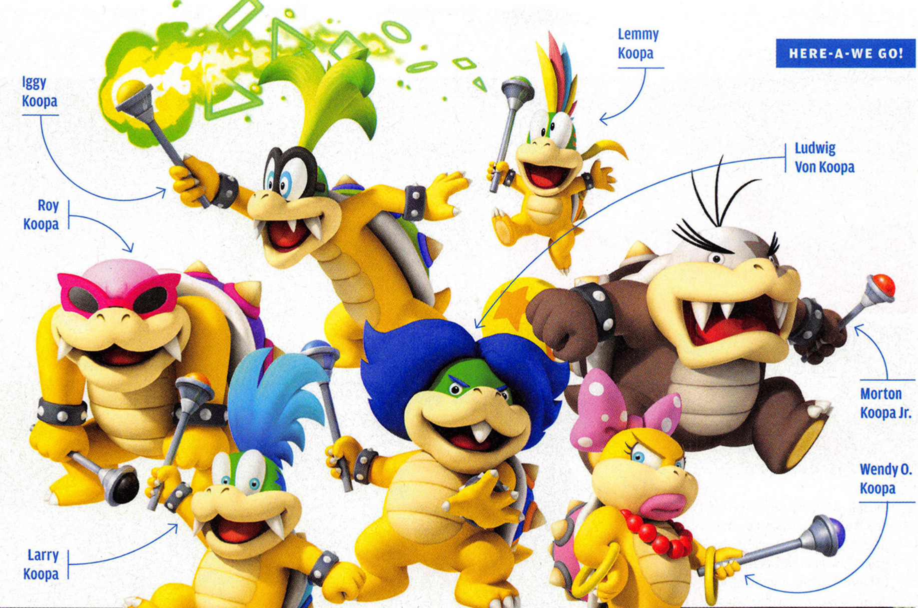
x03 x04 x05 x04
57
02499020
629



[Left, below] Hit the green block to have Luigi show you how to beat a level.

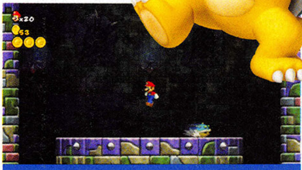


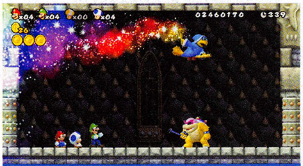
x03
14
02659440

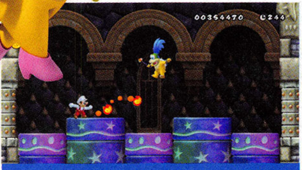


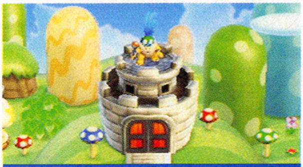
The Koopalings Return!

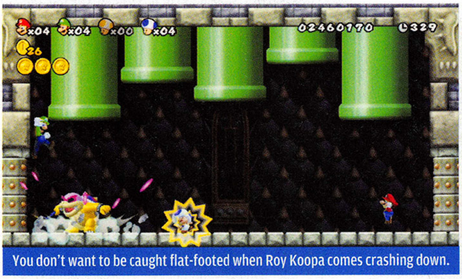
Originally introduced in Super Mario Bros. 3, Bowser's seven underlings are back to serve as bosses. Each rules one of the game's worlds, and you'll fight them twice—once at the midworld castle and again in the castle at the end of the world, where the fight gets tougher. Three head-stomps will usually finish off a Koopaling, but fireballs don't make much of a dent anymore. Bowser Jr. is in the game as well, and, as always, Bowser himself awaits Mario at the end.

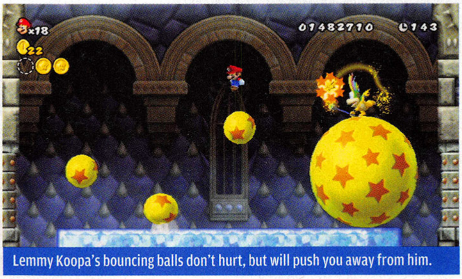

Koopalings each take three stomps to squash; after every hit they skid around in their shells.

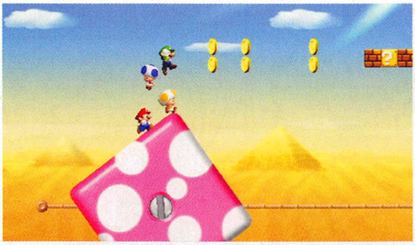

After beating the Koopa kids once, Kamek casts a spell to make them tougher for the rematch.

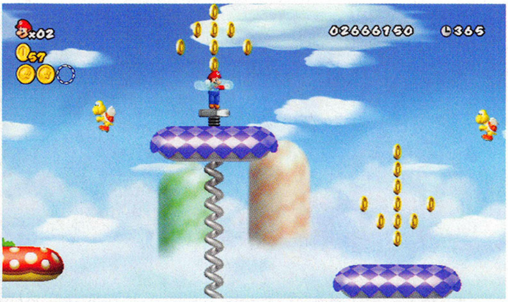

Larry Koopa rules World 1, and the undulating floor of his room makes him a tough target.


A world's reigning Koopaling first waits atop his midworld castle, then moves to the final one.

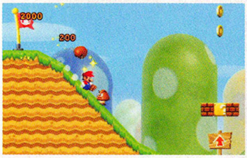

You don't want to be caught flat-footed when Roy Koopa comes crashing down.

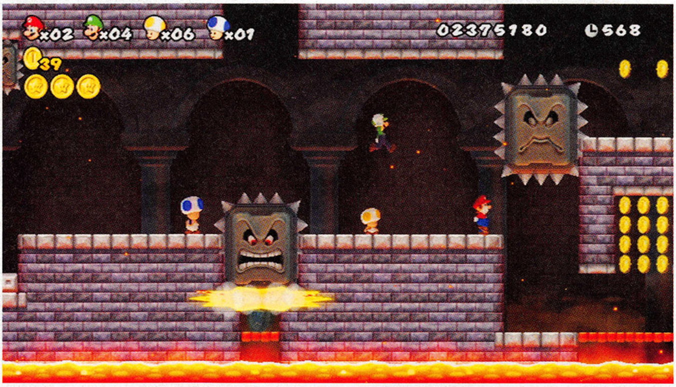

Lemmy Koopa's bouncing balls don't hurt, but will push you away from him.





[Right] Spinning on a screw raises a platform.





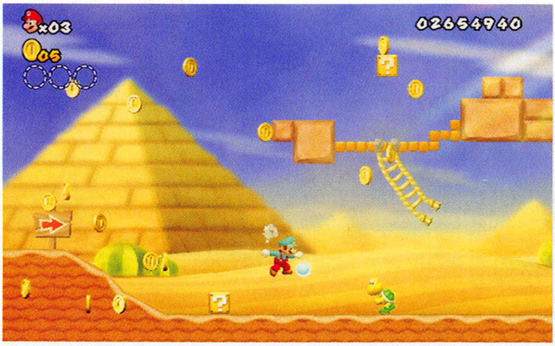
though no one has known exactly how it will work. While it's true that you can have the game play itself if you get stuck, we are happy to report that this doesn't take anything away from the challenge; the assist is there if you want it, but you can ignore it if you prefer.

You never *have* to accept the help, and it isn't even offered unless you fail the same level many times. Once you've reached the magic number, you'll find a green block waiting at the start of the stage. If you choose to hit it, Luigi will appear and demonstrate a path through the level. The player can retake control at any point, or watch Luigi through to the end of the stage. At that point you are given the option to continue on as if you beat the level, or to go back to the beginning to beat the stage yourself. Even if an expert player doesn't need the help, he may still want to watch Luigi's playthrough to see how a pro player from the development team tackles a level. No matter how great you might be at the game, chances are you'll still be able to pick up a few new tricks.

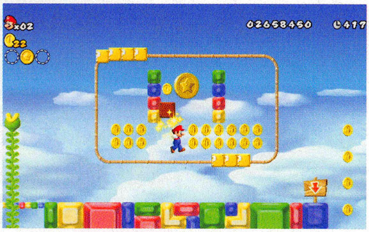
There's a lot of extra help on offer, and that's likely because New Super Mario Bros. Wii isn't easy—in fact, the game is *hard*. Maybe our Mario skills are a little rusty, but we're willing to bet that this is one of the hardest games in the series, and we love the extra challenge. If you're looking for a true test of platforming skills, you're about to get all you can handle.

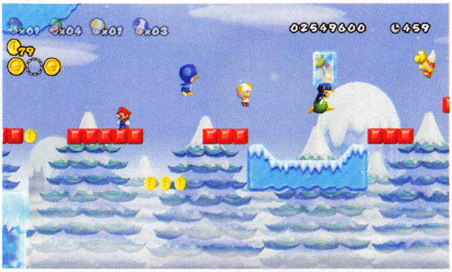
What Friends Are For

As fun as New Super Mario Bros. is with just one player, it's even better with friends. It's also harder. Although it helps to have Luigi and two Toads backing Mario up, players often bump into each other and spring off each other's heads accidentally while leaping along. The more people who play, the more difficult it becomes to stay clear of one other, especially in tight, enclosed areas,



[Left] Strong sandstorms blow players forward into danger.





forced-scrolling stages, and levels that scroll vertically. But far from hurting the experience, those kinds of "Oops, sorry!" moments make the action more lively. And when players learn to work together, they find cool, creative ways to clear stages.

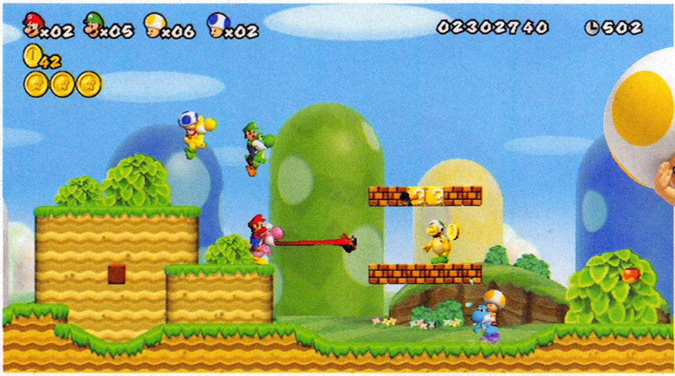
For example, Mario might let Luigi bounce off his head to reach a higher platform—or Mario could jump first so that Luigi's bounce will take him higher still. Or a skilled player could lift and carry a novice past a tough spot, throw him over a pit, or, if the character is wearing a Propeller Suit, give him a lift up into the sky. We can just imagine the superplay videos that are sure to turn up showing expert players performing well-choreographed team stunts.

While playing through the main game, there is no reason to be competitive: you can advance only by working closely together. (Players will be encouraged to go against each other in other modes, but Nintendo is keeping those details a secret for now.) When a character dies, he reappears a few seconds later encased in a floating bubble. He can't break free until a teammate or a projectile hits his bubble, although he can shake the Wii Remote to float faster toward another player's character. Sometimes it helps for a player to stay inside his bubble through a tricky part of a level, but if his teammates kick the bucket before he's popped, it's game over and everyone goes back to the start of the stage or its midway checkpoint.

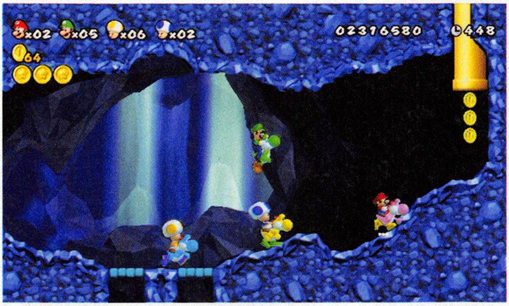
Multiplayer Mario really is a blast. Playing through real Mario levels with buddies is way more fun than any of the head-to-head minigames that have appeared as bonus modes in some of the series's past titles. And if you find that jumping around with four players is a little too crazy, two-player action is a nice compromise. Although it doesn't offer the same kind of frantic fun, teaming up with just one partner makes it easier to coordinate, and you won't cost each other nearly as many lives.

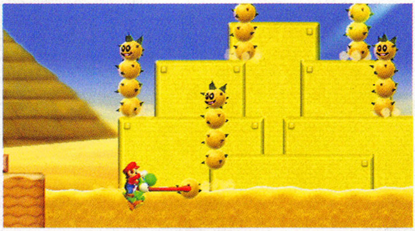
Well Worth the Wait

Mario games don't come along very often, and classic side-scrolling Mario adventures are even more rare. After playing through most of the game's eight worlds, we're thrilled to say that Nintendo appears to have made the most of this installment, providing loads of everything you love and significant new features that make the legendary series even better. Whether you set off to save the princess alone or with a posse of Yoshi-riding peeps at your side, you're in for some of the greatest fun you've had with your Wii console all year.



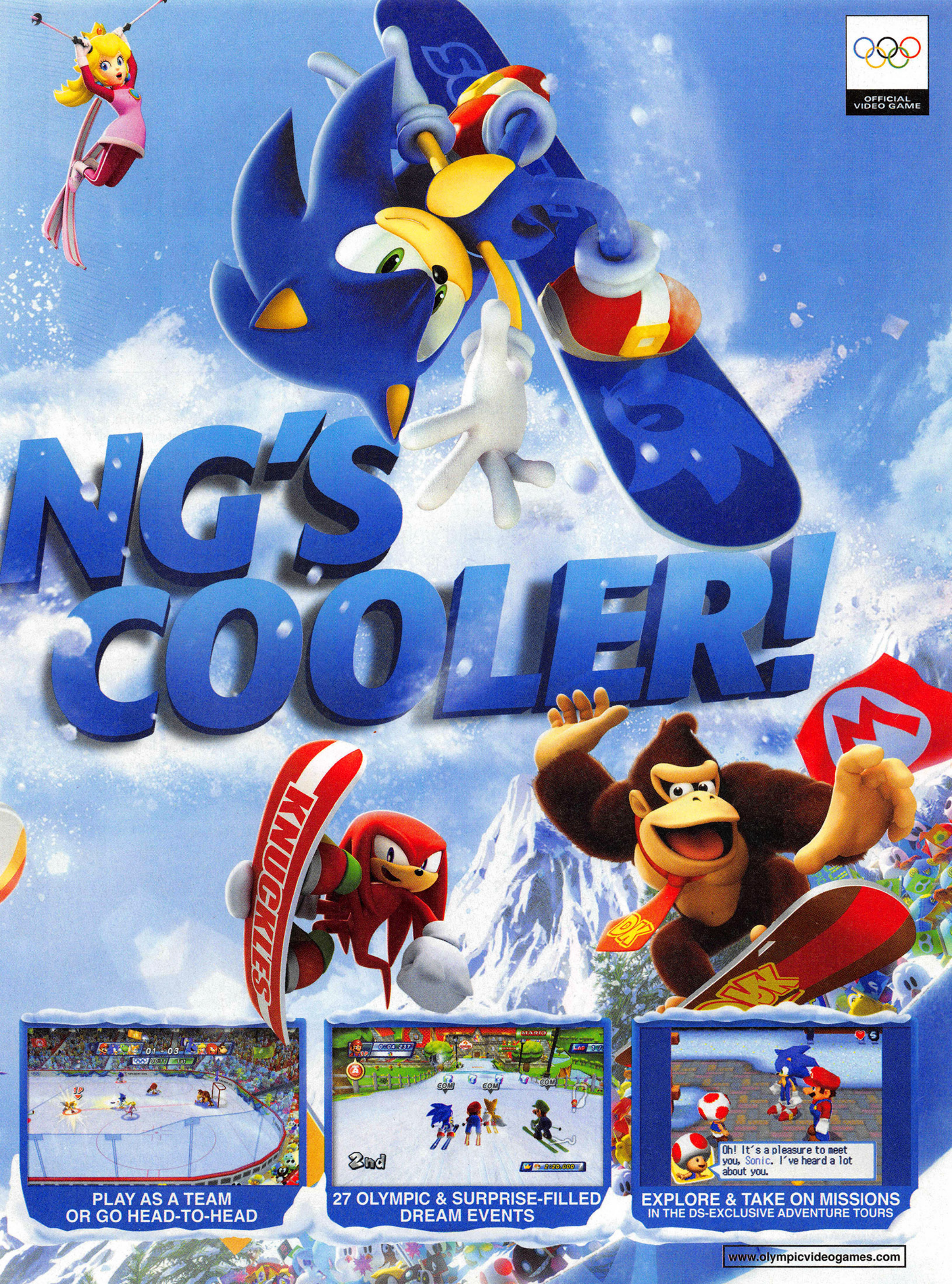
Thankfully, the game always gives enough Yoshis for everyone.





vancouver 2010
MARIO & SONIC AT THE OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES™
NOTHI
YOSHI
EVERYONE™
E
Mild Cartoon Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org
PUBLISHED BY
SEGA
Wii™ / NINTENDO DS.

TM/MC VANOC/USOC 36USC220506. Copyright © 2009 International Olympic Committee ("IOC"). All rights reserved. SUPER MARIO characters © NINTENDO. SONIC THE HEDGEHOG characters © SEGA.


OFFICIAL
VIDEO GAME
NG'S
COOLER!

Oh! It's a pleasure to meet you, Sonic. I've heard a lot about you.

PLAY AS A TEAM
OR GO HEAD-TO-HEAD

27 OLYMPIC & SURPRISE-FILLED
DREAM EVENTS

EXPLORE & TAKE ON MISSIONS
IN THE DS-EXCLUSIVE ADVENTURE TOURS

www.olympicvideogames.com

Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing brings its own unique take on behind-the-wheel thrills to Wii.

SEGA on the FAST TRACK

SEGA FANS, START YOUR ENGINES. Because the next big kart racer on the Wii console doesn't feature a plumber and his pals. It stars a certain blue hedgehog, a maraca-shaking monkey, a boy in a chicken suit, and one of the most endearing casts of third-party characters to ever grace a video game system. Throw in crazy courses, wild vehicles, and an assortment of power-ups, and you get Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing—which is shaping up to be the most exciting kart game this side of the Mushroom Kingdom.

The developers at Sumo Digital set out, first and foremost, to make a racing game that isn't just a quick cash-in with beloved characters, but rather is a solid, fun, arcade-style driving game with accessible game mechanics and pick-up-and-play controls. (You can play by turning the Wii Remote controller like a steering wheel or you can add a Nunchuk controller and steer via the Control Stick; Classic Controller compatibility is pending.)

"The game started out as a pure racer," reveals producer Steve Lycett. "We went off on the tack that Sega has all these well-loved classic racing games, like OutRun, Daytona USA, Virtua Racing, and Scud Race [aka Sega Super GT], and we wanted to capture the spirit of those. So it's more about speed,

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN

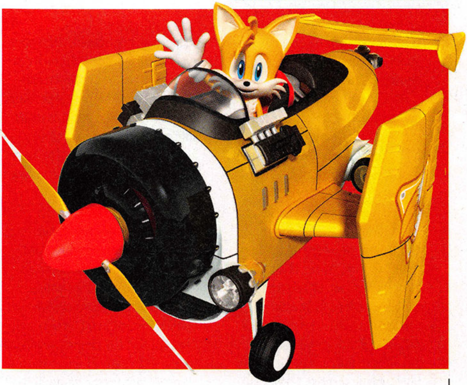
chaining drifts together, and enjoying the thrill of the ride. As we went on, Sega suggested we ought to try some weapons, so we did! At first we were skeptical about it—as we knew it would draw comparisons with certain other games—but once they were in it added a whole lot of fun and tactics to the game. It actually made it play better, which, when you're making games, is the most important thing, right?"

Dream Cast

Just as important in a game of this type, however, is a lovable selection of characters, and Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing is set to deliver in that regard; if you ever owned a Sega Master System, Genesis, or Dreamcast, you'll probably be in true-blue heaven. As the game's title implies, Sonic the Hedgehog and several of his associates (including Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Big the Cat, Shadow the Hedgehog, and Dr. Eggman) are featured drivers, but that's just the beginning. The roster includes more than 20 characters, such as AiAi (from Super Monkey Ball), Amigo (from Samba de Amigo), Billy Hatcher (from Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg), Beat (from Jet Set Radio), Alex Kidd (from the vintage Alex Kidd series), Ulala (from Space Channel 5), and even Ryo Hazuki (from Shenmue).

Not every character from Sega's storied history could make it in (we were kind of hoping for Golden Axe's Death Adder riding a dragon), but the diverse roster should satisfy a lot of fans. "Picking characters is fun and heartbreaking at the same time," Lycett admits. "We want to get in everyone's favorites, but at the same time we need to release the game this decade!"

Sumo Digital had previously worked with an array of Sega characters for games such as Sega Superstars Tennis (released last year for Wii), but they still consulted with the creators in Japan to make sure that all of the heroes stayed true to their roots. "Right at the start, we went over to Japan and visited all the different divisions," relates Lycett. "We've worked closely with all the original creators to ensure that their characters are represented as the fans want them. So models, animations, music, speech, everything goes back to [Sega of Japan] to be checked over and rubber-stamped. In a lot of cases they've also sent us designs for cars, ideas for gameplay...they've been really involved and supportive and it's been fantastic to have the pleasure of working with both them and their creations."



Each of the drivers is able to show off his or her personality not only with unique animations (look for them to celebrate when they're in the lead or show more determination if they're falling behind), but also character-specific vehicles. Sonic, for example, drives a racecar that emphasizes his trademark speed, while Tails flies his familiar plane and Ryo rides a motorcycle. Each character has benefits and drawbacks depending on the type of vehicle they drive. Racecars are best on hard surfaces but slower off-road; motorcycles have average speed on all surfaces but better acceleration and handling; off-road vehicles have an advantage on terrain, such as grass, mud, sand, and water; and flying vehicles have no terrain benefits but can get a turbo boost during jumps.

The characters' unique traits shine brightest when they use their special All-Star powers. Though you can use All-Star abilities only by acquiring a random pickup (which you're more likely to get when you're performing poorly), they're easily the coolest, flashiest, and most powerful maneuvers in the game—à la the special moves in Sega Superstars Tennis. Sonic, as you might expect, transforms into golden Super Sonic to overpower the competition; Amy smacks everybody out of the way with a hammer; AiAi calls down his

[Above] That appears to be Ryo Hazuki in the distance, giving the international hand signal for "Eat my dust, hedgehog!"

PLATFORM **Wii**	PUBLISHER **SEGA**	DEVELOPER **SUMO DIGITAL**	RELEASE **FEBRUARY 2010**

Monkey Ball pals to flatten the opposition; and Amigo forces his opponents to form a conga line.

Though not as potent, there are numerous other helpful power-ups, such as Sonic's high-tops for a turbo boost; a paintball bomb that obscures an opponent's vision; a defensive shield; the aptly named Big Bomb that knocks your adversaries for a loop; and the Confusing Star, which Lycett cites as his favorite. "When this hits you, it rolls the screen 180 degrees," he explains. "For some reason you just can't switch left and right in your head and although we don't do anything to the controls, it always takes you by surprise." Of course, driving skill is just as important as using items; by drifting and by performing stunts during jumps (accomplished by flicking the Wii Remote), you can earn speed boosts to give yourself an edge.

Mega Drive

You'll need every advantage you can get as you tackle the game's 20-plus courses—all inspired by classic Sega games, naturally. Environments include Seaside Hill, Casino Park, and the Final Fortress (all from Sonic the Hedgehog), Blizzard Beach (from Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg), Tokyo-To (from Jet Set Radio), Curien's Mansion (from The House of the Dead), and stages from Super Monkey Ball and Samba de Amigo.

The zany courses feature multiple types of terrain, along with massive jumps, corkscrew loops, shortcuts, and level-specific hazards that tie into the stage's theme. "On the Monkey Ball tracks, you'll come across Monkey Balls rolling around to avoid," describes Lycett. "On Seaside Hill, you'll run across the classic Crabmeat and Chopper badniks from earlier Sonic games. We try and get in as many supporting characters, cameos, and enemies [as possible] to make the environments feel true to how you remember them."

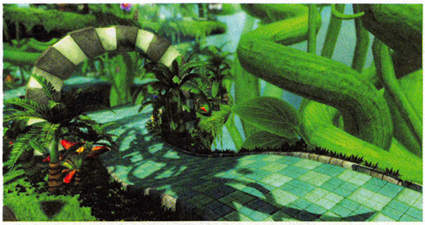
A similar philosophy of old-school appeal carries over to the music. Composer Richard Jacques—who's been associated with Sega racing games dating back to Sonic R, Daytona USA: Championship Circuit Edition, and Sega Touring Car Championship (all for the Sega Saturn)—is creating all-new tunes for the game, and some of Sega of Japan's top musicians are pitching in as well. "On top of that," states Lycett, "we've been allowed to go back through Sega's vast library of music and pick our top racing tunes from the past. In Sega Superstars Tennis we had something like 80 pieces of music—this is going to be a lot, lot, lot bigger."

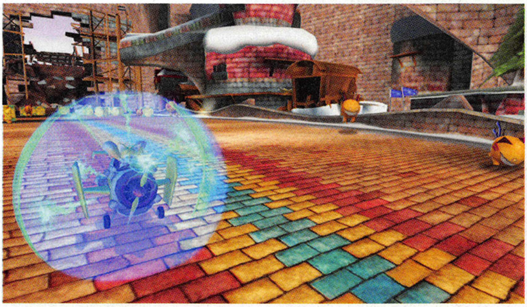
There is more to the game than unadulterated Sega goodness, though. It also features numerous modes, including traditional grand-prix races, time trials, more than 50 single-player challenge missions (taking out a number of enemies within a time limit, drifting perfectly through a race, or collecting rings, for example), four-player local split-screen versus play (in both a race mode and a battle mode), and eight-player online competition.

Sonic and Sega All-Stars Racing seems like it has all the components to be a top-tier kart racer: solid gameplay, great characters, and tons of content (including plentiful unlockables). So Mario better start checking his rear-view mirror—Sonic and company are about to give him a run for his money.

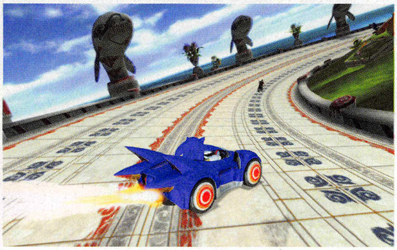
Shenmue 3?

OK, no, it's not Shenmue 3. But for fans of the acclaimed Dreamcast adventure Shenmue, Ryo Hazuki's appearance in Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing might be the next-best thing. Sure, Ryo may never resolve his father's murder, but at least the sailor-seeking, Lucky Hit-playing high-school dropout gets to have some fun demonstrating his sweet motorcycle skills to anthropomorphic animals. Ryo's All-Star power promises to be one of the best in the game: in an homage to one of Shenmue's most memorable sequences, Ryo exchanges his bike for a forklift that lets him plow through anyone in his path.





In case you're wondering, yes, all the vehicles in Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing are powered by Blast Processing.



YOU FOUND THE OCARINA!

Sweet Potato Ocarina $39.95 €33.00 £30.00
5 holes (1 thumbhole, octave +1), includes Songbook/Tutorial/Songs from "The Legend of Zelda"

Extended Range Sweet Potato $49.95 €40.00 £36.00
6 holes (2 thumbholes, octave + 4), includes Extended Range Songbook plus Songbook I/Tutorial/Songs from "The Legend of Zelda" series

Extended Range Sweet Potato XL $59.95 €48.00 £43.00
Bigger and deeper sounding! Same Songbooks as Extended Range

Majora's Mask Ocarina
$24.95 €20.00 £18.00
5 holes octave +1, includes necklace and songbook tutorial

Eagle Bone Flute
$29.95 €24.00 £22.00
(Cast in porcelain, simple to play, w/ necklace and playing instruction)

Silk Carrying Case
$5.95 €5.00 £4.50
Padded w/ zipper, handle and embroidered dragons
Fits all ocarinas

Extra Ocarina Songbooks $2.95 ea €2.50 £2.00
Songbook II, Christmas Carols, Beatles for Extended Range

Legend of Zelda Songbook $4.95 €4.00 £3.50
36 songs for 5 and 6 hole Ocarina

SHIPPING INFO

Shipping & Handling €12 £10.75 (2-3 weeks for delivery)
PRIORITY Shipping €12 £10.75 (2-7 biz days for delivery)
We ship via US Postal Service

Order via our Website or call Toll Free!
1-866-899-4046

Songbird Ocarinas

- Easy To Play
- Ceramic Flute
- Songbook/Tutorial Included
- Minuets, Serenades, Requiems
- Handmade in U.S.A.

2751 East 11th St. Los Angeles, CA 90023

www.songbirdocarina.com

Songbird Ocarinas is not affiliated with or endorsed by Nintendo of America, Inc.

DEEP SPACE

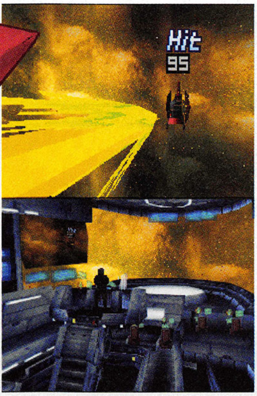
Sega and PlatinumGames put a star fleet in the palm of your hand with DS opus Infinite Space.

EVER SINCE JAMES T. KIRK took the helm of the *USS Enterprise*, commanding your own starship has been one of those ultimate geek fantasies. Yet tragically few video games have afforded us the opportunity (particularly outside the PC realm). Enter Infinite Space, an incredibly ambitious RPG/starship simulation from development group Nude Maker and PlatinumGames producer Atsushi Inaba. These folks are no strangers to dream fulfillment; their last collaboration was Steel Battalion for Xbox, which let you pilot a giant mech using a 40-button controller and foot pedals.

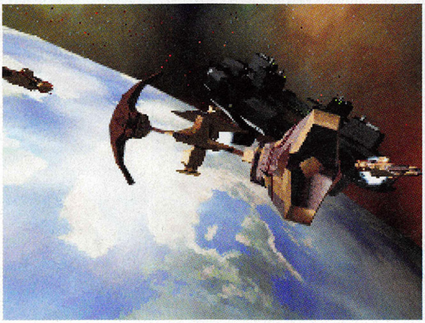
Though Infinite Space lacks a $200 peripheral, the depth of the experience is no less astonishing. You start the game with a relatively modest craft, but you'll soon acquire blueprints for additional ships by purchasing them from shops or fulfilling certain objectives. There are more than 100 unique schematics in all, divided into four basic categories: cruiser, destroyer, battleship, and carrier. Once you've had a ship built, you can customize it down to the smallest detail. We're talking unabashed, stat-crazy sim nirvana. Thanks to a clever module interface, though, the actual process of fabricating your vessel couldn't be more intuitive. Each ship has a grid, which you'll fill with modules representing facilities such as the bridge, engine room, sick bay, etc. Modules come in various shapes and sizes, and each one affects your ship in different ways. An administration office improves the craft's livability, for instance, whereas a research laboratory helps your science team develop new modifications. It's sort of like piecing together a puzzle, and it forces you to set priorities in the process.

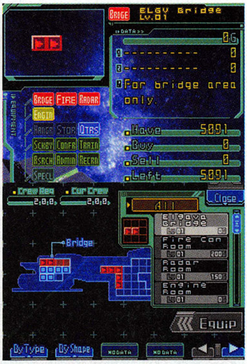
Of course, you'll also outfit the ship's weapon battery with all sorts of different armaments, ranging from laser cannons to missiles to antifighter guns. This procedure is independent of the modules, and the number of weapons that can be installed varies from vessel to vessel. Last but not least, you'll assign your crew, from the ship's first officer to its cook. And these aren't just anonymous red shirts. Over the course of your travels, you'll encounter more than 150 potential recruits, each with a distinct personality and back story. Whether they'll join you depends not only on your ability to pay them, but also on your reputation. Each character has different attributes and special skills that makes him better suited to certain roles than to others. Someone with a high Medicine score and low Piloting aptitude, for instance, will be far more effective

Sure this ship looks awesome, but how's its cook?



[Right] For the full experience, shake your DS to simulate the impact.




BRDGE
ELGV Bridge
LV.01
DATA
0G
1 ----------
0
2 ----------
0
EQUIPMENT
BRDGE
FIRE
RADAR
ENGIN
HANGR
STOR
QTRS
SCKBY
CONFR
TRAIN
RSRCH
ADMIN
RECRN
SPECL
Have 5091
Buy 0
Sell 0
Left 5091
Crew Req 2,0,0,
Cur Crew 2,0,0,
Close
All
Elgava Bridge Lv01 0G
Fire Con Room Lv01 200G
Radar Room Lv01 150G
Engine Room Lv01 0G
Bridge
Equip
ByType
ByShape
NODATA
NODATA

For bridge area only.

[Above] Look at all those glorious stats!

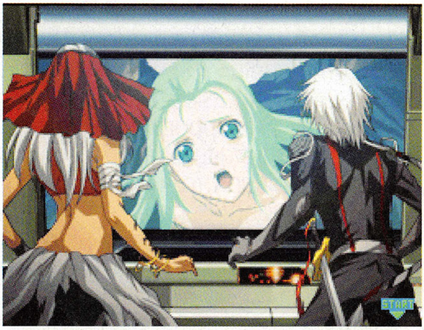
BY STEVE THOMASON

PLATFORM **NINTENDO DS**	PUBLISHER **SEGA**	DEVELOPER **NUDE MAKER/PLATINUMGAMES**	RELEASE **SPRING 2010**

in sick bay than in the cockpit of a fighter. (Though if you don't care for that particular character, you can always assign him to fighter duty anyway, you cruel bastard.) Naturally, your crew will benefit from experience, showing increased proficiency as you win battles, complete missions, etc.

The game spans not one but two galaxies, and you'll travel from planet to planet simply by tapping a destination on the map screen. Along the way, you'll encounter less-than-friendly forces eager to put your careful preparations to the test. Though combat is menu-driven and highly tactical, it incorporates real-time elements not unlike the Active Time Battle system found in select Final Fantasy titles. (For a detailed explanation of how skirmishes unfold, see the "Man Your Battle Stations!" sidebar below.)

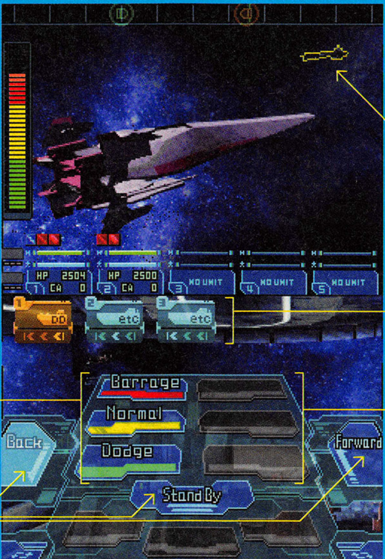
Tying the whole enterprise together is a classically science-fiction narrative that follows the adventures of an eager young hero named Yuri while exploring the larger theme of mankind's curiosity and how it's affected where we find ourselves today. At times, you'll be presented with branching paths that impact not only how the story unfolds, but also which crewmembers you'll meet, which bosses you'll encounter, and more. From top to bottom, few handheld titles boast such impressive size and scope. And judging by the response out of Japan (where the game is already available), Infinite Space has the quality to match. Our command assignment can't come soon enough.



The expansive story it told through beautifully illustrated cut-scenes, giving the game a strong Japanese RPG flavor.

MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS!

As you'd expect from a starship simulator, Infinite Space's battle screen is filled with all sorts of gauges, panels, and indicators. Here's how it all works.



COMMAND GAUGE
Depletes as you issue commands, and gradually refills over time. The rate at which it depletes and refills depends on certain members of your crew. The colors correspond to the various commands on the bottom screen. To execute a Normal attack, for instance, your Command Gauge must be at least in the yellow.

PLAYER FLEET
Displays the status of all ships in your fleet. You can eventually command up to five ships at one time.

BASIC COMMANDS
All ships can perform these commands, which have a rock-paper-scissors relationship. A Barrage Attack is more powerful than a Normal Attack, but it's easier to avoid using Dodge.

NAVIGATION
Moves your ship in relation to the enemy. Overall maneuverability depends on certain members of your crew.

BATTLE GAUGE
Displays the position of both your fleet and the enemy's, as well as your attack range.

ENEMY SHIP
The colored outline indicates the current state of your opponent's Command Gauge.

ENEMY FLEET
Displays the type and placement of every ship in the enemy fleet. To choose your target, you simply tap the desired tab.

ADVANCED COMMANDS
These commands vary depending on the ships in your fleet. Certain vessels have the ability to scramble fighters, fire antiaircraft guns, execute special attacks, or even send boarding parties onto enemy craft (which in turn triggers a new set of commands).

STAR GAZERS

To get the inside scoop on one of our most anticipated titles of 2010, we traveled the far reaches of the galaxy for a chat with Infinite Space director Hifumi Kouno and producer Atsushi Inaba.

NINTENDO POWER **How did you come up with the idea for Infinite Space?**

HIFUMI KOUNO I was in my early teens in the midst of the sci-fi heyday, so my body naturally developed an appetite for these types of titles. However, I never thought that I would actually have the chance to develop a title like this when I grew up.

Why did you choose to make the game on the Nintendo DS system?

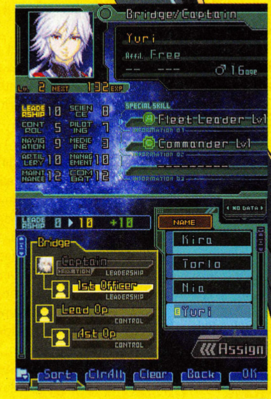
KOUNO When I was presented with the development budget for this project, it was not enough for a console platform, but fairly large for a handheld platform. I determined that in order to develop this as a console game, we would have to remove many features from the original concept, which I wanted to avoid. Therefore, I chose the Nintendo DS platform instead, in order to establish the epic grandeur of this title. As a result, I was able to pack in everything regarding the story from my original concept into this tiny hardware.

How did this partnership between Nude Maker and Platinum Games come about? Can you talk a little bit about how the responsibilities were divided?

ATSUSHI INABA Mr. Kouno and I originally worked on Steel Battalion together, and since then, I had always wanted to work with him again, but it has, unfortunately, been difficult to materialize. Therefore I approached Mr. Kouno about this collaboration with the hope that we would be able to add a different flavor to the current PlatinumGames lineup. In terms of the responsibilities between PlatinumGames and Nude Maker, I am producing the title from PlatinumGames and the concept creation and development are being done by Mr. Kouno and the Nude Maker team.

New franchises have a tough time making a splash in today's market, yet Infinite Space debuted at number one on the Japanese sales charts. Why do you think this game was able to find an audience?

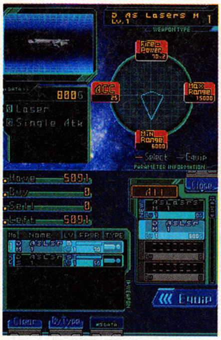
INABA I believe it was because we had a very clear target. This game is not a casual title that would be universally accepted, but a title that can be very selective of its audience. However "customizing space ships," "stories of outer

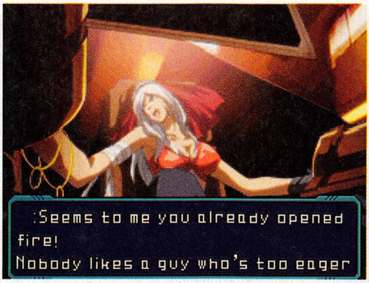

Bridge/Captain
Yuri
Affil. Free
-- ---
♂ 16age
Lv. 2 NEXT 132 EXP
LEADERSHIP 10
SCIENCE 8
CONTROL 5
PILOTING 7
NAVIGATION 9
MEDICINE 3
ARTILLERY 10
MANAGEMENT 10
MAINTNANCE 12
COMBAT 12
SPECIAL SKILL
Fleet Leader Lvl
INFORMATION 01
Commander Lvl
INFORMATION 02

INFORMATION 03
NO DATA
LEADERSHIP 0 ▸ 10 +10
NAME
Kira
Torla
Nia
Yuri
Bridge
Captain
FIXATION
LEADERSHIP
1st Officer
LEADERSHIP
Lead Op
CONTROL
Ast Op
CONTROL
Assign
Sort
ClrAll
Clear
Back
OK

Yuri serves not only as the game's main hero, but also as the captain of your fleet.

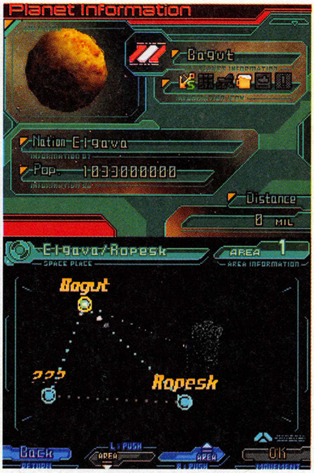
:Hey! That thing's--


D AS Lasers M
Lv.1
Fire Power 70x2
ACC 25
Max Range 15000
Min Range 6000
Laser
Single Atk
Have 5891
Buy 0
Sell 0
Left 5891
Equip



:Seems to me you already opened fire!
Nobody likes a guy who's too eager

[Above] Nia here provides you with your first ship. She's sort of like a female Han Solo.


Planet Information
Bogut
Nation-Elgava
Pop. 1033800000
Distance 0 MIL
Elgava/Ropesk
AREA 1
Bogut
???
Ropesk
Back
OK

space," [and] "science fiction" are very attractive keywords for fans of the genre. I think we were able to achieve these results by continuing to send out clear, unwavering messages to those fans. Of course, we were only able to send those messages because we were confident that the quality of the game would meet the fans' expectations. I also believe that our title stood out in the market overall due to the decline of the orthodox DS titles that give gamers a truly enriching gameplay experience.

What are some of your favorite pieces of science fiction, and were there any that influenced you during development?

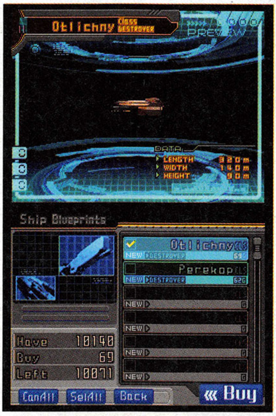
KOUNO *Star Trek*, *Space Runaway Ideon* (anime), A.C. Clarke's *Childhood's End*, Ryu Mitsuse's Japanese novel *Hyakuoku no Hiru to Senoku no Yoru*, and *Captain Harlock* (anime).

INABA *HOTEL* (comic), *The Long Afternoon of Earth* by Brian W. Aldiss, *PLANETES* (comic), and *Aliens*.

Nude Maker and Mr. Inaba previously collaborated on Steel Battalion, which also offered an unusually deep simulation (albeit in terms of controls). What is it about offering this depth of experience that appeals to you?

INABA For entertainment content, there definitely exists a certain "flavor" or explosiveness that cannot be created by just one company. Steel Battalion may be one example of this. Both Mr. Kouno and I had the satisfaction of successfully offering a deep simulation experience through that project, but we are both the type to want to press forward even more.... We would like to continue offering even deeper experiences to our gamers.

Why did you choose Masafumi Takada (Killer 7, No More Heroes) to compose the game's soundtrack, and what does his music bring to the experience?


Otlichny Class DESTROYER
PREVIEW
DATA
LENGTH 320m
WIDTH 140m
HEIGHT 90m
Ship Blueprints
Otlichny
NEW DESTROYER 69
Perekop
NEW DESTROYER 620
NEW
Have 10140
Buy 69
Left 10071
CanAll
SelAll
Back
Buy

KOUNO Mr. Takada and I were colleagues at my previous company, and I had always rated his talents highly. His music expands the game world many times more than even what I envision, and his talents proved true in this title as well.

We understand Nude Maker has only nine employees. How did you manage to tackle such an ambitious project?

KOUNO We have invested a lot in tools, such as our unique "scenario tool," that support development by a small team. However, I believe that above all else, it was our tenacity that supported this title. Everyone, including new graduates who had just joined our company, understood the value and meaning of creating this title and willingly sacrificed their health and time for that cause.

> "Everyone, including new graduates who had just joined our company, understood the value and meaning of creating this title and willingly sacrificed their health and time for that cause." —HIFUMI KOUNO

Are any changes being made for the American version of Infinite Space?

KOUNO There are no differences besides the language.

Do you foresee Nude Maker and Platinum Games working together again in the near future?

INABA As I mentioned before, the exciting part about collaborations is the explosiveness that cannot be realized with just one company. I would like to consider such opportunities in the future as well.

Finally, what is Mr. Kouno's approach when it comes to building the ideal starship?

KOUNO For the beginning to middle chapters, I prioritize ship-management personnel, such as head cooks, over combat personnel since your command speed decreases significantly during travel as your fatigue level increases. For weapons, I concentrate on configuring with missile-type weapons. One reason for using missile-type weapons would be the strength of damage and high ratio of critical hits, but my biggest reason is the cool firing effects. Basically, the best play style is to create a space ship that *you* think is cool.

What's that smell?
TOP 7
talk radar
? ? OF THE WEEK
TOP 7 EVERY MONDAY
Originality
games radar
WHAT'S THAT SMELL? ORIGINALITY
FRESH GAMING CULTURE
STRONGEST BOREDOM-FIGHTING FEATURES ANYWHERE • MOST WIN PER CAPFUL OF ANY GAME SITE • BRILLIANCE AND MADNESS IN EVERY PODCAST • GETS SCREENSHOTS BRIGHTER • SPECIALLY BLENDED VIDEOS • LEAVES BRAIN SOFT AND REFRESHED
gamesradar.com

ULTIMATE ZELDA

We name our favorite boss, dungeon, weapon, and more, and pick the best Zelda game of all time!

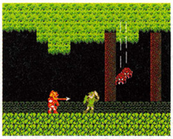
BY CHRIS SLATE & THE NINTENDO POWER STAFF

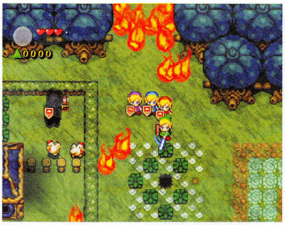
NINTENDO FANS take The Legend of Zelda games very seriously. We each have our favorite installment, which usually corresponds to our first magical visit to the land of Hyrule. These incredible experiences are so varied and personal that it's impossible to arrange them into a best-to-worst list that works for everyone. No matter what the order is, more people will disagree with it than agree, so you'd be crazy to even try, right? Heh, yeah.... Please don't kill us.

See, with The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks coming out for the Nintendo DS system on December 7, we couldn't help ourselves. Here at Nintendo Power, we've been buzzing about the new adventure for months, and we've had some fun ~~fistfights~~ chats about the series's best games, dungeons, items, bosses—you name it. After a lot of thought and a little compromise, we've come up with a list that we feel pretty darn good about. And whether you agree or disagree with our picks, we invite all like-minded Link-lovers to join the discussion and celebrate the many memories and milestones that make our beloved series what it is today.

13. Zelda II: The Adventure of Link

1988 • NES That a classic like The Adventure of Link would be ranked the lowest on any list speaks volumes about the high standards of the Zelda series. With side-scrolling combat and an RPG-style world map, Zelda II is a radical departure from the series that some fans call a refreshing change of pace and others consider an outcast. The game cuts down on puzzle solving to focus heavily on action, and it's the most difficult Zelda game by far. Even the most basic enemies are tough, and once you're out of lives and have to continue, Link is sent all the way back to where the game starts! Urg! Frustration aside, Zelda II debuted Link's iconic downward-thrust attack, introduced magic to the series, and remains the only title where Link can earn experience and level up.

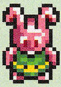




12. The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures

2004 • GAMECUBE Four Swords Adventures isn't a typical Zelda game; the adventure is split into various stages and works best with multiple players. Despite those differences, however, the onscreen action is classic Zelda. The game is also noteworthy for being the last 2-D console entry in the series, and it enhances the visual style established in A Link to the Past with the extra power of the GameCube (it's fun to see the screen packed with more enemy sprites than the Super NES could ever dream of handling). Up to four players can help or hinder each other during the quest, much like a Zelda version of New Super Mario Bros. Wii. The game really loses something when played solo, however.

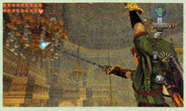
BEST HOOK: Light World/Dark World (A Link to the Past)



The time-hopping structure of Ocarina of Time came very close to winning this category, but the Light and Dark worlds of A Link to the Past offer a slightly better play mechanic. Whereas the time periods in Ocarina can be shifted from only one specific spot, Link can travel fairly freely between the mirrored worlds in A Link to the Past, thereby setting up many back-and-forth puzzles that challenge the player to think in fun ways. Plus, Link becomes a rabbit upon entering Dark World. Case closed.

BEST ITEM: Double Clawshots (Twilight Princess)

The only thing better than a Hookshot is two of them, which is essentially what you get with the Double Clawshots. Swinging them around is the most fun you can have with items in a Zelda game, and they are dead-useful for snagging Rupees or poking at an enemy from a distance.

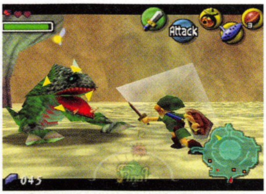


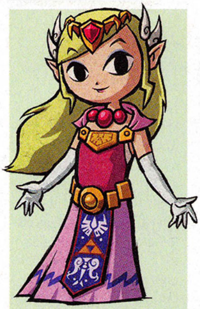
BEST WEAPON: Bow (All games)

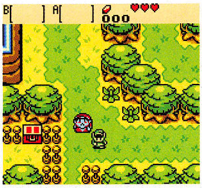
As basic as it is, nothing is handier than the bow, no matter which Zelda game you're playing. Whether firing off a simple long-distance attack, triggering a switch, using special arrows, or—our favorite—shooting through fire to create a flaming arrow, this is one weapon that you always want to keep equipped.

11. The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask

2000 • NINTENDO 64 Like The Adventure of Link, Majora's Mask is a different kind of Zelda quest that polarizes fans. The main point of contention is its unique structure—the same three days are looped over and over, and Link must race the clock to explore the world and take part in events that happen only on specific days. Although this results in a lot of innovative time-twisting puzzles, it puts extra pressure on the player to accomplish his goals before the loop restarts (it's not much fun to be sent back to the first day while working through a dungeon). Majora's Mask is overshadowed by its more noteworthy predecessor, Ocarina of Time, but it boasts better visuals than its N64 sibling (including fully 3-D towns) and gives Link the welcome ability to transform into different forms that possess unique skills.

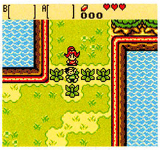






10/9. The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages/ Oracle of Seasons

2001 • GAME BOY COLOR Although Oracle of Seasons and Oracle of Ages are each full, distinct games, they were released as a set and certain items can be traded between them via a password feature. These Game Boy Color standouts are classic Zelda adventures, but contain totally unique elements. For instance, you can equip different rings to customize Link's abilities (similar to how badges work in the Mario & Luigi series), and you can use animals to help Link in various ways (although our hero doesn't exactly ooze coolness while tucked inside a kangaroo's pouch). We give a slight nod to Oracle of Seasons over its brother, since its titular hook—being able to switch between spring, summer, winter, and fall—is like having four versions of the world to explore and makes for cooler puzzles. The ability to travel between past and present in Oracle of Ages is fun, but A Link to the Past did this kind of thing first—and best—with its Light World/Dark World setup.

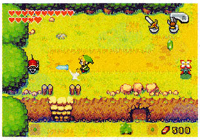


BEST PRINCESS ZELDA: The Wind Waker

The princess was little more than a prize to be found in the early games (she even slept through Zelda II), but her role has grown over time, especially in the 3-D adventures. By far, Zelda's most prominent role is in The Wind Waker, since (spoiler alert!) she joins Link for much of his adventure as the spunky pirate Tetra. Once her true identity is revealed she even joins Link in his final battle with Ganon, making for one of the series's best climactic scenes.

BEST BOSS: Twilit Dragon Argorok (Twilight Princess)

This is an incredibly tough category, as the Zelda series is known for its amazing boss battles, but for our Rupees, you can't beat the epic feel of the flying-dragon fight from Twilight Princess. It's a very unique battle in that it takes place outdoors, high above the ground, amidst a moody, stormy setting. The fight is built around using the Double Clawshots—our favorite Zelda item—and plays like a thrilling high-wire act as Link swings around the environment in an attempt to latch onto the beast.



8. The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap

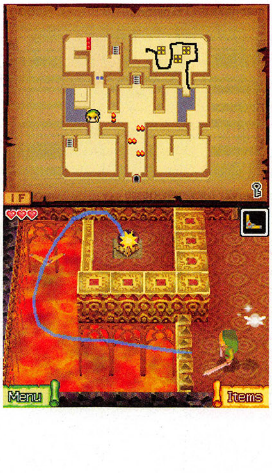
2005 • GAME BOY ADVANCE In some ways, The Minish Cap is the best handheld entry in the series. Its traditional 2-D-sprite graphics are gorgeous; the lush, detailed environments just beg to be explored; and you can search them to an unprecedented degree thanks to Link's ability to shrink. The game has a fantastic overworld that feels more like a massive Zelda dungeon with puzzleish elements concealed in nearly every screen. Although The Minish Cap was developed by Capcom—like Oracle of Seasons/Oracle of Ages—you'd never know it, as the game delivers classic Zelda goodness from beginning to end.

BEST OVERWORLD: The Minish Cap

Exploring the overworld in The Minish Cap is especially fun because it feels more like a dungeon due to the puzzle-ish element of nearly every screen. This is doubly true when you consider that many areas can also be explored with Link shrunk to a tiny size, which opens up the world even more.

7. The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass

2007 • NINTENDO DS This precursor to the upcoming Spirit Tracks proves why the Nintendo DS is a great home for The Legend of Zelda. Stylus controls make the familiar Zelda action feel fresh again by adding fun new interactions and abilities to traditional weapons like the boomerang and bow. It's a drag, however, that Link's inventory is smaller than usual. The game's biggest drawback is its central feature: that you have to return to the Temple of the Ocean King over and over, exploring its depths a little more each time. Too much backtracking is required, and if you put the game down for a few days, it's hard to remember the paths you've already discovered. Sailing isn't tedious as it is in The Wind Waker, however, and exploring new areas of the ocean adds to the game's fun sense of adventure.



GF GAMEFLY.COM

Video Game Rentals Delivered to Your Door

Over 7,000 Titles • No Late Fees • Free Shipping

Wii
Harvest Moon Animal Parade
Wii
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games
SEGA
Wii
Bakugan Battle Brawlers
Activision
Nintendo DS
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon Explorers of Sky
XBOX 360
PS3
SONY

Start now for only $8.95

Go to gamefly.com

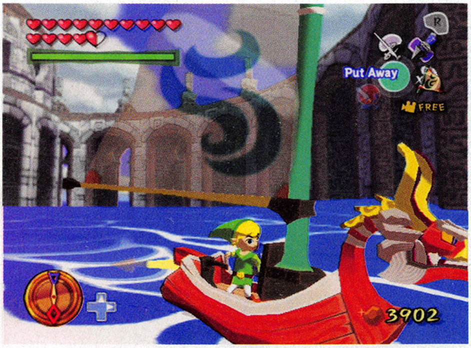
PLAYSTATION 3 Wii XBOX 360

PlayStation 2 PSP PlayStation Portable XBOX NINTENDO GAMECUBE NINTENDO DS GAME BOY ADVANCE

© 2009 GameFly, Inc. GAMEFLY and the GF Logo are trademarks of GameFly, Inc. All other marks used under license by their respective owners. Unless you cancel your account, your credit card will be charged for the price of your game plan at the end of your free trial. You must be 18 years of age or older and reside inside the 50 United States to use the GameFly service.

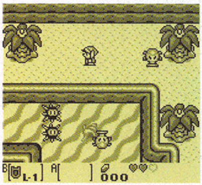
6. The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker

2003 • GAMECUBE If you prefer cute little young Link to the less cuddly older version, then you'll agree The Wind Waker has the most jaw-dropping graphics the Zelda series has ever seen. The vibrant, stylized visuals look better than any cartoon, and hold up incredibly well today, six years after the game's release. However, the title's defining gameplay feature—sailing—is incredibly tedious (it takes forever to sail from one island to another and, annoyingly, you have to spend time casting a spell every time you want to change your heading). But while on land, this Zelda adventure is as good as any other. It features some of the series's coolest locations, one of its best stories, and some fun twists. As much as we love the look of Twilight Princess, it will be a shame if we never again get to see these kinds of graphics in a console Zelda game.



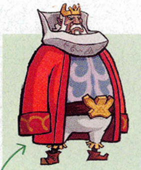
5. The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening/DX

1993/1998 • GAME BOY/GAME BOY COLOR Sixteen years after its initial release, Link's Awakening continues to resonate with fans in a special way. Perhaps it's the game's unique story (spoiler alert: it's all a dream) and its memorable, bittersweet ending, or its humorous writing (we still chuckle every time we attempt to search a chest of drawers and the game deadpans, "Wow! This is a nice chest!"). Or maybe the game is remembered so fondly simply because it's an especially well-crafted Zelda adventure with a massive world to explore, tons of secrets to find, and a long line of deep dungeons that seem to push the Game Boy beyond its usual limits. The DX edition improves the game by using the color graphics of the Game Boy Color to add new features, such as a dungeon with color-based puzzles. But even in Game Boy green, Link's Awakening is one of the best handheld games ever.



BEST SECRET: Second Quest (The Legend of Zelda)

The Zelda series is famous for its many hidden treats, and the second quest in The Legend of Zelda is easily the most grandiose and the most famous. Beat the game—or simply type in "ZELDA" as your file name—and you're treated to another adventure, with relocated items and entirely new dungeons. You can't ask for a better bonus than that!



BEST STORY MOMENT: Beneath the Waves (The Wind Waker)

The Zelda series is packed with epic moments and cool twists, and you get both with the undersea revelation in The Wind Waker. Link has already explored much of the sea-covered world when he reaches the story's big turning point, where you learn (spoiler alert!) that the ancient land of Hyrule rests hidden beneath the ocean he's been sailing upon. The immortal King of Hyrule meets Link beneath the waves and spills several big secrets, some of which connect the game directly to the events of Ocarina of Time.

BEST TUNE: "Overworld Theme" (The Legend of Zelda)

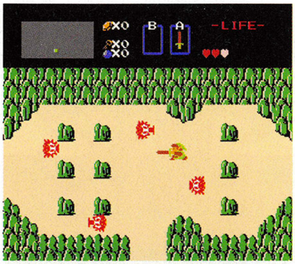
Zelda games are well known for having amazing soundtracks, and each has at least a few original songs or variations on classic themes that really stand out. Ocarina of Time in particular blows us away with the many now-standard Zelda melodies it introduced as ocarina songs. But if we have to pick one tune to stand above the rest, how could it not be the original overworld theme from The Legend of Zelda? It's appeared in just about every sequel, but the original 8-bit rendition will forever be burned into our brains.

4. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess

2006 • Wii/GAMECUBE Although not as groundbreaking as the series's other top titles, Twilight Princess is in many ways the ultimate expression of a Zelda adventure. It's certainly the most refined game in the series: it has the best overall controls, 3-D camera, story scenes, and graphics (if you like your Link tall and lean), and it packs in more overall content with an extralong play time. Link's ability to transform into a wolf isn't the franchise's most epic hook, but it's fun. Twilight Princess also features the best versions of many classic characters and beasts, and we can't get enough of newcomer Midna berating Link as she rides atop his lupine form. The motion controls work great—we simply can't go back to aiming a bow or boomerang any other way—but the GameCube version is there to take care of anyone who might grumble about the Wii Remote controller. If we could recommend only one Zelda game without taking the historical significance of other installments into account, this would probably be it.

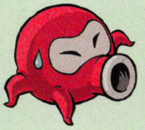
3. The Legend of Zelda

1987 • NES The Legend of Zelda is a timeless classic, and one of the most influential video games of all time. What's truly impressive is that the 22-year-old title contained all of the series's core gameplay concepts from the start: dungeons, secrets, exploration, a large inventory of weapons and items—it's all there. The game's nonlinear structure was groundbreaking back in the '80s (you could even play dungeons out of order), as was its ability to save the player's place in the adventure via a battery built into the cartridge. Additionally, The Legend of Zelda was challenging without ever getting too frustrating, and despite its ancient 8-bit graphics, this groundbreaking adventure is as fun as ever to embark on.



BEST DUNGEON: Goron Mines (Twilight Princess)

This fiery deathtrap has a bit of everything that makes Zelda dungeons the best levels in gaming, plus it's absolutely gorgeous, with scorching fire effects and dim atmospheric lighting. The Goron Mines cover a wide variety of areas, from lava-filled caverns to a kind of outdoor shooting gallery. Its rooms center on the use of the Hero's Bow—which is especially fun to use in the Wii edition of Twilight Princess—and it's a blast to ride magnetic waves to the ceiling for some upside-down exploration via the Iron Boots. The sumo-style midlevel boss battle with a giant Goron is well done, and the final fight with Fyrus (the giant flaming monster that looks like the Balrog from *The Lord of the Rings*) is epic. All Zelda games have great dungeons, but the Goron Mines is the epitome of amazing level design.



BEST ENEMY: Octorok

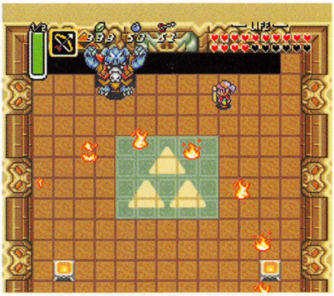
Is there a more iconic Zelda monster than an Octorok? With all due respect to Moblins and Tektites, we don't think so. These rock-spitting beasties never put up a tough fight, but are always satisfying to cut through while running to your next destination.

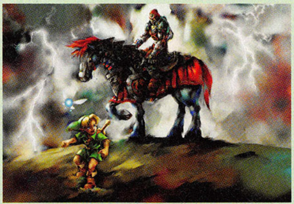
BEST SUPPORTING CHARACTER: Midna (Twilight Princess)

Not only is the bratty, controlling, kind-of-cute/kind-of-creepy Midna one of the franchise's most fleshed-out characters, but she's also the rare video game character that grows and changes throughout the course of the adventure. While we rolled our eyes along with Link at Midna's nasty remarks early on, we grew to like the irrepressible imp as she and Link became friends.

2. The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

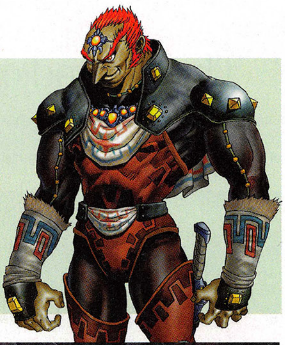
1992 • SUPER NES A Link to the Past returned the series to full glory after the mixed results of the experimental Zelda II. The series's only Super NES installment refined and perfected the top-down view and the classic Zelda formula introduced in the original title, and it remains the best 2-D Zelda game. It was a real beauty back in its day, thanks to colorful 16-bit graphics and smooth animation. The music was fantastic, and the game did a great job of establishing mood (such as during the opening scene where the land is dark and stormy). A Link to the Past was the first title to add a unique hook to the usual Zelda gameplay, in this case the ability to travel and solve puzzles across two mirrored environments, the Light and Dark worlds. The game also marked the first appearance of Zelda mainstays such as the Hookshot, Pegasus Boots, bottles, and the Master Sword, and the story delved into Ganon's past for the first time. Finally, more so than perhaps any other Zelda title, this game simply does not age.



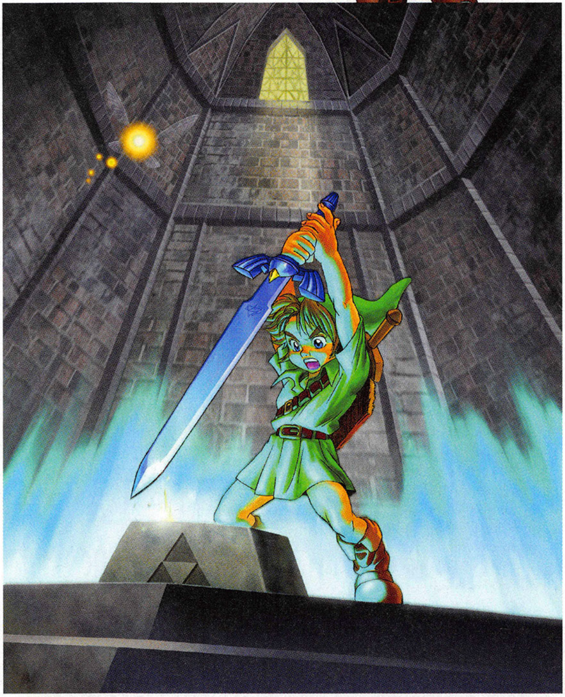


BEST GANON: Ocarina of Time

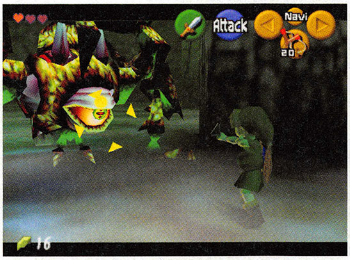
The first N64 Zelda title introduces us to Ganondorf, the human form of Link's perpetual archenemy, and tells the story of how a conniving thief became the biggest threat Hyrule has ever known. He makes his presence felt throughout the game instead of appearing only at the end (as he does in previous Zelda installments) which makes the dramatic final battle all the more epic.

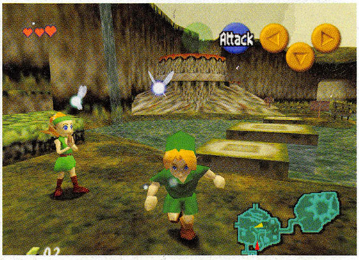


1. The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time



1998 • NINTENDO 64 As tough as it was to put together this list, there was really no other choice for the top spot. Not only is Ocarina of Time one of the best Zelda games if you consider pure gameplay alone, but it's also the series's most revolutionary, influential installment since the original NES adventure. Many players, magazines, websites, and game creators have called it the best video game ever made. It added many major new elements to the Zelda series—such as Link's horse, Epona, and autojumping—and it introduced the gaming world to features that have become standard in action games, such as a lock-on camera. This is absolutely a must-play for anyone who's ever enjoyed a Zelda game. The early 3-D graphics are a bit dusty, but play for just a few minutes, and the incredible game world, clever dungeon designs, unforgettable characters, and well-told story will grab hold of you and never let go. Ocarina of Time is the blueprint for modern 3-D action-adventure games, and is nothing less than a masterpiece.





IT'S DANGEROUS TO GO ALONE! TAKE THIS.

89 STICKERS × 1 CALENDAR + 12 POSTERS =

NINTENDO POWER

NINTENDO POWER COLLECTOR'S SPECIAL

2010 CALENDAR

FEBRUARY'S CLASSIC NINTENDO MOMENT: Raccoon Mario takes flight in Super Mario Bros. 3.

AN UNBEATABLE PACKAGE:

A 16-MONTH CALENDAR FEATURING CLASSIC NINTENDO GAME SCENES and TRIVIA

89 STICKERS to CUSTOMIZE YOUR CALENDAR

POSTERS for EVERY MONTH of the YEAR!

TURN the PAGE TO SEE MORE

NINTENDO POWER SPECIAL ISSUE

$9.99US

Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION

ON SALE NOW
Only at newsstands!

Your quest for the best wall calendar is over!

Nintendo properties are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2009 Nintendo.

33

Power Profiles

DATE OF BIRTH
February 6, 1968

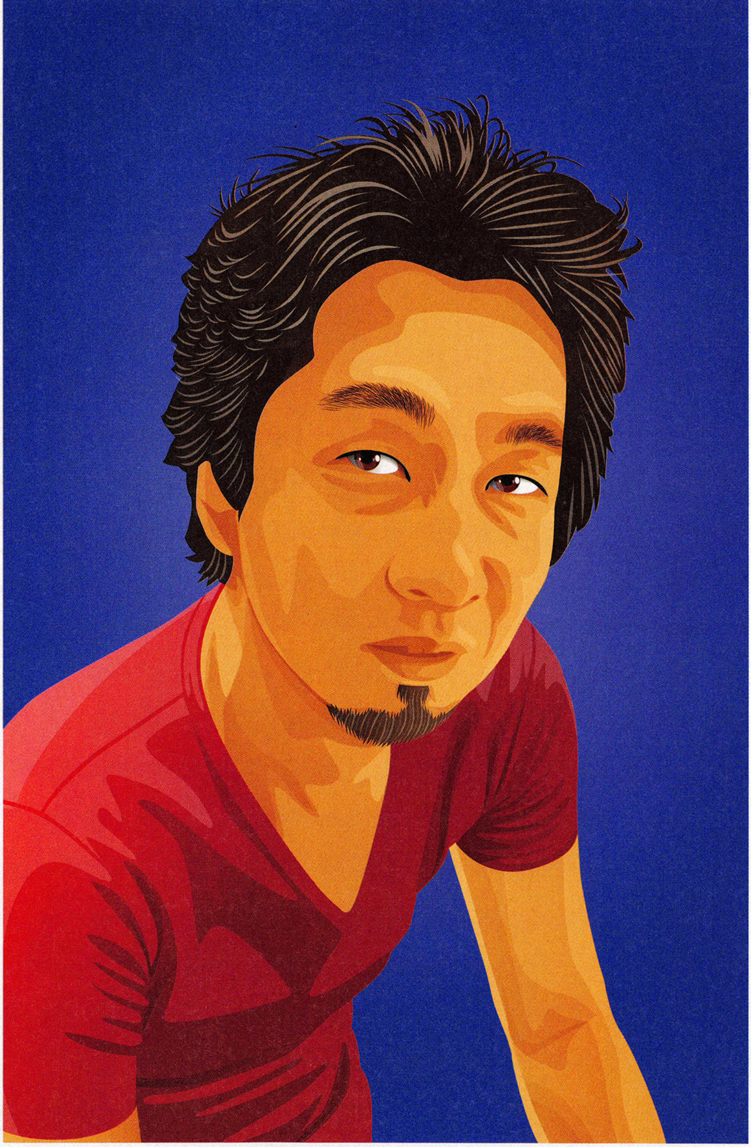
BIRTHPLACE
Tokyo, Japan

POSITION
Producer, Konami Digital Entertainment

BEST KNOWN FOR
Producing and composing music for the Silent Hill series, scaring gamers into a cold sweat

FAVORITE FOOD
Sweet-and-sour pork

CURRENT PROJECTS
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories; an unannounced project to be revealed in 2010



Akira Yamaoka

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA EMPEDOCLES

You can probably count on one hand the number of video game creators who've made the jump from music composer to game producer, but Akira Yamaoka is one of them. And he didn't do it while making just any old game series—he did it while working on Silent Hill, one of the top names in survival-horror and arguably the scariest franchise in all of gaming. Silent Hill's unique music and sound effects get into your psyche and don't let go, creating a tense unease that preys upon your emotions—and proving that Yamaoka is indeed a master of his craft. Yamaoka's works extend beyond gaming, too. His compositions appear in the soundtrack for the *Silent Hill* theatrical film, he wrote the theme song for French TV program *101%*, and in 2006 he released his first commercial album, *iFUTURELIST*, in Japan.

NINTENDO POWER
How did you first become involved with the video game business?

AKIRA YAMAOKA
About 20 years ago, an acquaintance of mine asked me if I would be interested in creating music for a PC game and I accepted the offer. I was so happy when I was asked because I love both video games and music.

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
When I was younger my dream was to be an interior designer. I wanted to design something organic that really reflected my personality. This is something I would still like to do one day.

Where did your interest in music come from?
My interest in music began in junior high school, when the new-wave movement was very popular in Europe. When I first heard this type of music it really blew me away because it was so powerful and different from other traditional music genres I was used to.

What are some of your favorite musical artists, and what do you consider your musical influences?
I really like Conny Plank. He was a great artist and also a producer of many other great artists like Ultravox, Neu!, Holger Czukay, and DAF. The sounds he created were very experimental and defied the existing concept of music. I was very fascinated by his style.

We understand you attended Tokyo Art College. How are you able to use what you learned there to combine aspects of art into your musical compositions?
I don't create music based on any music theory or methodology. I create music based solely on my own personal style. It is like I convert sounds to colors in my head and put them together. In that sense, the designing and drawing that I learned at the Tokyo Art College have been useful.

What was your experience like during your early days at Konami? What important lessons did you learn from that time?
Before I joined Konami, I was an independent music creator. I thought in order to continue doing this job successfully, I had to learn more about the clients or companies that gave me work. Therefore, I decided to join Konami.

I feel that it is sometimes very difficult to do all the things I want to do when working in an organization as opposed to working for myself. This is just my impression, not an important lesson, though.

How did you end up working on Silent Hill? What attracted you to the project?
When I first heard about this new project called Silent Hill, I wanted to create the sound for the game. I had always liked the horror genre, but also all kinds of dark-themed content. So I volunteered to be the sound person without hesitation. Because many members of the team were already knowledgeable in art and/or music, it was very easy for me to communicate and talk with them. With such a great team, I knew from the beginning that we would be successful.

What do you consider the defining characteristic of your music? What do you consider the defining characteristic of the music of Silent Hill?
I believe that the defining characteristic of my music is that it is not based on any music theory. My music is created based solely on my intuitions. I think the defining characteristic of the Silent Hill music is the fact that it is music that is not based on music. All the Silent Hill sounds are intuitive. If I want people to feel uncomfortable, I use noise, for example. Most people get annoyed by noise. I try to directly convey such intuitive sounds without interpretation for Silent Hill. I don't follow the typical way of creating music, such as creating rhythms first, adding melodies and then layering low-pitch sounds. I think about how I can vividly convey the emotions of the sounds.

Why did you make the jump from composer to producer on Silent Hill? What was that experience like? Was there anything you had to deal with as producer that you didn't expect?
Up to Silent Hill 2, I was involved just as a music creator, but I was often making suggestions for other areas besides music. Then my boss said, "Why don't you oversee the overall project?" So I started to get involved as a producer, too. I wanted to improve not only creative skills as a music creator, but also other skills, including management skills. I am determined to continue to work as a creator, but I thought having both creative skills and other skills would be very useful at some point in the future. We can't get management or producing skills without actually experiencing the roles. All creators are making efforts every day to get better and if I just do the same thing all day long, I don't think I would make much of a difference. I thought I would be a more unique creator if I acquired skills that other creators don't have while

GAMEOGRAPHY

Early in his career, Yamaoka worked on a number of colorful, cartoony titles such as Smart Ball and Sparkster. He's spent the last several years, however, making grown adults poop their pants with fear as the premier member of the Silent Hill team.

SMART BALL
1992, SUPER NES
ASSISTANT COMPOSER

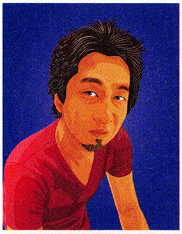
SNATCHER
1994, SEGA CD
SOUND DESIGN

SPARKSTER: ROCKET KNIGHT ADVENTURES 2
1994, SEGA GENESIS
SOUND DESIGN

SILENT HILL
1999, PLAYSTATION
SOUND/MUSIC DIRECTOR

SILENT HILL 2
2001, PLAYSTATION 2
SOUND DIRECTOR, MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS

Power Profiles



continuing to make an extra effort as a creator. So I decided to take the producer role.

I had to deal with things that were not directly related to the game, such as team management and the mental care of my staff. I should say everything was something that I never expected that I would need to handle, but I think the experiences have definitely helped me as a creator.

Are there other aspects of game development that you'd like to have a hand in?
I would like to get more involved with the visual and movie-making aspects of game development. This is something I originally wanted to do, so I would like to try someday.

You've acted as DJ at some Konami events. Is DJing something you like to do in your spare time?
Ah, memories! I like DJing very much. The feeling of spinning sounds is very much like a live music performance. I enjoy it very much.

You're best known for Silent Hill, but are there other games you've worked on in which you think your compositions were especially good?
I can't seem to recall any at this time. [Smiles] I don't consider video game music, including the Silent Hill music, as "music." I consider it more as "sound" that complements the images, game, and story to create an entertaining experience. So even if I thought I created cool music, if I don't get excited or enjoy playing the game with the music and images combined, then I can't say, "I created good music."

What other types of games would you like to work on?
I want to work on games that Japanese people don't usually make.

The video game culture that originated with Japanese people has become "entertainment" that is created throughout the world now. Whether good or bad the games created by Japanese people have distinctive characteristics regardless of genre. Even new types of games often follow the Japanese game-design model. I would like to work on new type of content that breaks this Japanese mold.

How have things changed in the gaming industry since you started?
It has changed completely. With a lot of new content and technologies made in the global markets, the scope of video game development has changed dramatically. Many different genres have been introduced and the users have become more diversified.

> *"I don't create music based on any music theory.... I create music based solely on my own personal style."*

Like the movies, theater, and music, as the video games diversify and a wide range of users accept them, more variety of content is created.

What aspect of creating a video game do you enjoy the most?
I love the moment when a game I work on actually shows up on a TV screen for the first time after I have struggled so much to create the concept and design. The moment alone makes it so gratifying. Also I enjoy seeing how users respond to the game after it's released.

If you weren't composing music or making games, what do you think you'd be doing?
[I'd be] a struggling artist.

When you're stumped by a particularly difficult problem while creating a game, what's your process for working through it?
For some staff members who tend to give up, I make sure to seal off every possible escape route. If a rescue boat is waiting for us, we will likely stop focusing on moving forward and start to think [about] how to escape. But if there is no escape route, people often start to show true strength. It might seem too harsh, but that's what I do when I face difficulties.

What other games or game creators do you most admire or respect, and why?
I admire SUDA51 of Grasshopper Manufacture very much. He has an ability to bring the Japanese-centric content to the West successfully. He is one of the few Japanese developers who I believe has the ability to do this. My favorite game is No More Heroes.

Whose works in other forms of media, such as film or literature, do you most admire or enjoy?
I enjoy the works of Alejandro Amenábar and Chaplin. They are movie directors but they also handle music for their movies. Although their jobs are different, they handle things that influence all aspects of their films and I feel that I have something in common with them and empathize with them.

When I watch their movies, I deeply feel the creators' enthusiasm and feelings for their works.

What is your favorite hobby or pastime?
Cooking. I can be completely absorbed in it and I enjoy the feeling so much.

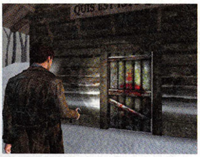
If you could have one superpower, what would it be?
I want the ability to speak every language and communicate with people from all around the world.

GAMEOGRAPHY

CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER
2002, PLAYSTATION 2
SOUND EFFECT DESIGN, MUSIC COMPOSER/DIRECTOR

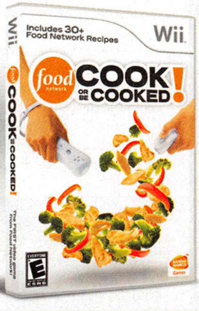
SILENT HILL 3
2003, PLAYSTATION 2
PRODUCER, MUSIC, SOUND DIRECTOR

SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM
2004, XBOX
PRODUCER, COMPOSER, SOUND DIRECTOR



SILENT HILL: SHATTERED MEMORIES
2009, Wii
COMPOSER

food network COOK! OR BE COOKED!

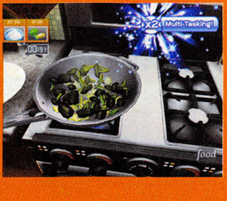


Includes 30+ Food Network Recipes
Wii
food network COOK OR BE COOKED!

STIR UP SOME ACTION AND COOK LIKE A PRO
in the only game created with Food Network.

Cut, slice and dice your way through 30+ real recipes taught by the experts from Food Network. Cook in multi-player mode or on your own. There's never too many cooks in this kitchen!

visit **www.CookOrBeCooked.com** to enter to win a food-filled trip to Food Network headquarters in New York City!



EVERYONE
E
Alcohol Reference
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

BANDAI NAMCO Games

Wii

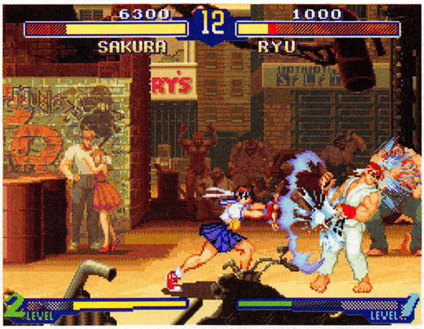
Food Network™, the Food Network logo and Food Network: Cook or Be Cooked™ are trademarks and service marks of Television Food Network, G.P. All rights reserved. Game ©2009 NAMCO BANDAI Games America Inc. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. ©2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

Street Fighter Alpha 2
Nintendo
THE ARCADE SMASH HIT IS NOW ON SUPER NES!
T
SUPER NINTENDO

PLATFORM: SUPER NES
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
RELEASE: NOVEMBER 1996
COVERED IN ISSUES: 89, 95, 98
HITS IN A RAGING DEMON SUPER COMBO: 15

It's the alpha and the omega of Super NES fighting games.

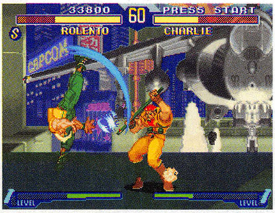


Who's that in the background? It's Haggar, Cody, Jessica, and the rest of the Final Fight crew. Now that's what we call fan service!

When it comes to one-on-one 2-D fighting games in the 1990s, there was no series bigger than Capcom's Street Fighter. And when it comes to Street Fighter, there is arguably no game better than Street Fighter Alpha 2.

A prequel to Street Fighter II, Street Fighter Alpha 2 could be considered the epitome of the franchise: precise, strategic 2-D fighting augmented with slick anime-style visuals, a great cast of characters, and a surprisingly satisfying narrative. The basic action was essentially the same as that of previous Street Fighter games—each character had three types of punches, three types of kicks, and special moves triggered by various Control Pad motions and button combinations—but SFA2 built upon that foundation with powerful meter-based Super Combos, Alpha Counters (the ability to counter any move at the cost of part of your supermove meter), and Custom Combos (the ability to temporarily chain together virtually any moves in the game). Granted, some of those features were in previous games in the series, but it was the first time they had appeared on a Nintendo system.

In addition to fluid, responsive combat, SFA2 boasted one of the era's best casts of fighters. Featuring warriors from the original Street Fighter (such as Ryu, Ken, Sagat, and Gen), Street Fighter II (including Chun-Li, Zangief, and M. Bison), and side-scrolling brawler Final Fight (Guy, Katana, and Rolento), as well as original heroes created for the Alpha games, the 18-person cast was as diverse as it was personality-packed.



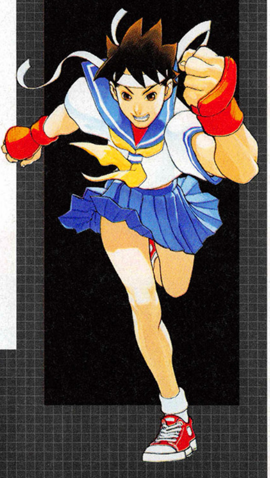
One of the coolest aspects of SFA2 was that not only did the characters have their own fighting styles, arenas, and endings, but also individualized bosses (complete with dialogue) that tied into their tales.

Taken on its own, the Super NES version of Street Fighter Alpha 2 was an excellent game. When compared to the arcade version, however, it's clear that sacrifices had to be made to fit the game onto a 16-bit cartridge—several sound effects and animations were missing, and there was a brief load time prior to each fight. Combined with the fact that the Nintendo 64 was already out at the time of SFA2's release and that the game was also released on technologically superior competing consoles, the Super NES version was overlooked by many gamers. As a result, it's one of the rarest games on the Super NES, as well as one of the best fighting games on the system. —**CHRIS H.**

Redheads have more fun!

YOU GO, GIRL

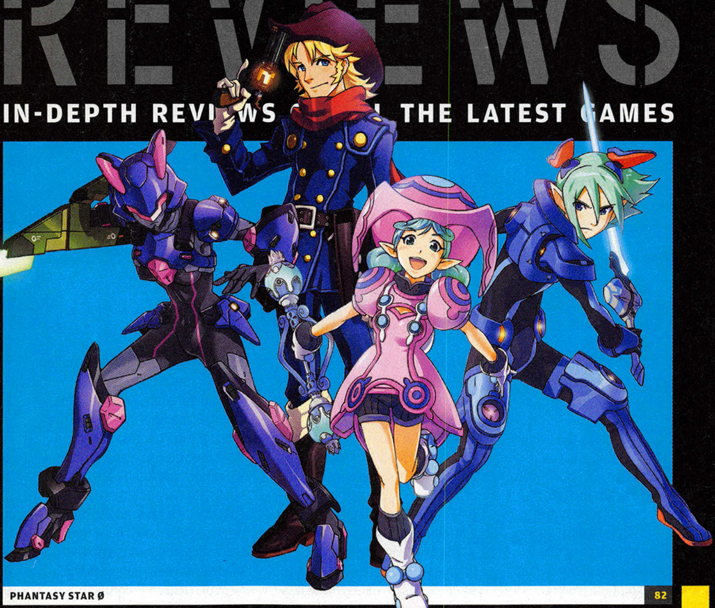
Street Fighter Alpha 2 featured 18 characters, including five that weren't in the first Street Fighter Alpha, but only one of them was brand-new: Sakura Kasugano. A tomboyish 16-year-old schoolgirl, Sakura became enamored with street fighting after seeing Street Fighter mainstay Ryu compete, and she created her own fighting style by modifying many of Ryu's moves; her Shououken was a running, multihit variation on Ryu's famous Shoryuken uppercut, for example. Sakura's story involved her quest to find Ryu and—hopefully—become his student, and to test her skills, she faced Ryu as her final boss. (If you played as Ryu, Sakura was Ryu's midgame boss.) Sakura's unique personality quickly made her one the most popular characters in the Street Fighter series, and she's gone on to appear in many subsequent titles.



HAVE A FAVORITE CLASSIC GAME YOU'D LIKE TO SEE REVISITED?
Send us your requests—we'll consider them for a future installment of Playback. **nintendopower@futureus.com**

REVIEWS

IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF ALL THE LATEST GAMES



PHANTASY STAR Ø 82

Robots and space cowboys team up at last in Phantasy Star Ø, the latest installment of Sega's venerable online RPG saga.

LUNAR RISE
1745
761

DRAWN TO LIFE: THE NEXT CHAPTER (DS) 88

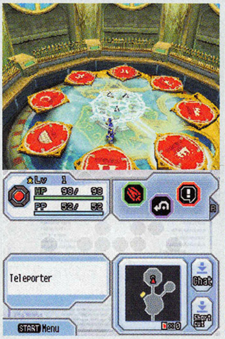
SUPERS
9
21,241
0459

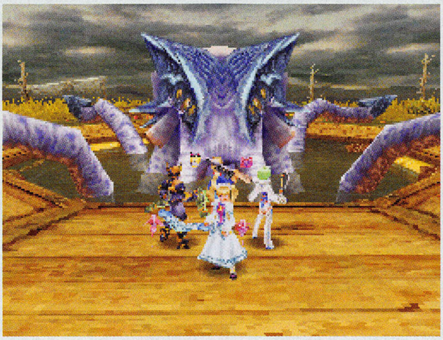
ASTRO BOY: THE VIDEO GAME 83

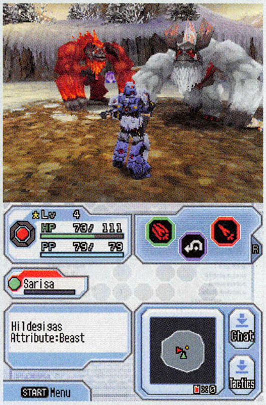
Pad
Attack
Skill
Defend
Item
Run

NOSTALGIA 86

Academy of Champions: Soccer	86
Astro Boy: The Video Game	83
Atellier Annie: Alchemists of Sera Island	85
Cooking Mama 3: Shop & Chop	87
Dance Dance Revolution: Hottest Party 3	84
Dragon Ball: Revenge of King Piccolo	88
Dragon Ball Z: Attack of the Saiyans	87
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter (DS)	88
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter (Wii)	83
FIFA Soccer 10	84
Fighting Fantasy: The Warlock of Firetop Mountain	89
Harvest Moon: Animal Parade	87
Harvest Moon: Sunshine Islands	85
Karaoke Revolution	86
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	89
Nostalgia	86
Phantasy Star Ø	82
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky	84
SimAnimals Africa	84
Space Invaders Extreme 2	88
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Arcade Attack	89
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010 (DS)	86
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010 (Wii)	85







Chip Off the Old Block

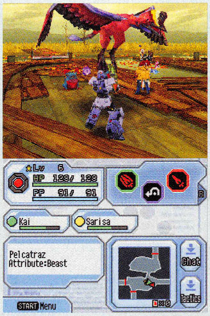
PHANTASY STAR 0

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SEGA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Phantasy Star Online was the granddaddy of all multiplayer console RPGs, and a darn good game to boot. Phantasy Star 0 has done a fine job of upholding the family tradition; it can't quite claim to be the *first* online action-RPG on the Nintendo DS handheld, but it is the only one to serve up a satisfying and substantial online experience. It does that by mining its rich heritage and copying everything that worked in Phantasy Star Online. You'll find the same race and class structure, a similar but expanded arsenal of weaponry, and the familiar framework of a hub town with guild quests that provide plenty of reasons to venture outside and slay monsters in a brightly colored world.

The few modifications in Phantasy Star 0 are modest but significant. Combat is a little less simplistic thanks to a new evasive roll and flashy, weapon-specific charge-up attacks. This installment also features a solid story mode that is a lot more enjoyable than the single-player offerings in previous online Phantasy Star games. While brief, it has good production values and a reasonably compelling plot, and provides an excellent opportunity to learn the ropes and level up for your multiplayer debut.



Unfortunately, not all of the changes are improvements. The interface in Phantasy Star 0 is a disaster; you can equip exactly six actions (including attacks, spells, items, and the defensive roll) to quick keys, and to do anything else you'll have to wade through a poorly designed series of lower-screen menus. In the heat of battle, it is completely impractical to cast any technique beyond that one or two that you have the space to equip, which takes all the fun out of playing Force units. Gone also is the ability to quick-swap weapons, so if you'd like to shoot an oncoming foe with a handgun and then switch to a melee weapon when it closes the distance, you'll have to enter your equip menu, scroll through your list of weapons, select one, press the B button twi—oops, you're dead. The online Phantasy Star games have never had much depth, and leaving only a handful of options at the players' fingertips has made matters even worse.

But even a simple game can be a blast in multiplayer, and at that, Phantasy Star 0 has no equal. You can play with up to three friends joined either wirelessly or over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, and the intuitive lobby system and robust netcode make the process smooth and stress-free. (Although, of course, we haven't had the opportunity to test the game with actual post-release server traffic.) When playing with strangers, you'll be limited to communicating via preset phrases, but registered friends can make use of a cute chat system that allows their character to speak in word bubbles with scribbled notes and drawings. Co-op play really is the only reason to buy Phantasy Star 0; although the story mode is decent, it cannot compete with the many excellent single-player RPGs on the platform.

I'm not sure if I should be wowed by Sega's ability to cram an entire Dreamcast/GameCube disc onto a DS cart with so few sacrifices in quality, or depressed that the series has evolved so little that we're still playing the same basic game nearly a decade later. It's a shame that the developers squandered the chance to really build upon Phantasy Star Online, but there's no denying that when you have a few friends at your side, Phantasy Star 0 is just as much fun as its grandpa used to be. **—CASEY L.**

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT OTHER GAME/SERIES COULD USE ENHANCED MULTIPLAYER (à la NEW SUPER MARIO BROS. Wii)?

Justin Cheng

An old-school-style side-scrolling Castlevania game with cooperative multiplayer could be pretty awesome.

Chris Hoffman

I really liked Scribblenauts, but I think it'd be even better with a multiplayer component. Trying to out-create your friends could be really cool.

Casey Loe

It would be fun to see Ice Climber, Clu Clu Land and other simple classics reinvented as multiplayer party games for WiiWare or DSiWare.

George Sinfield

Let's stay with Mario on this one. I'm going to say Donkey Kong. Tossing barrels at another player with the Wii Remote is a natural.

Chris Slate

There aren't a lot of multiplayer music games other than band simulators, so I vote for a two-player Rhythm Heaven.

David F. Smith

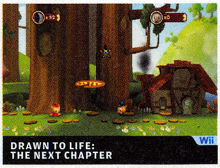
Here's one from deep in the back catalog—I'd like to see a dog-eat-dog (or box-eat-box) multiplayer version of Cubivore.

Phil Theobald

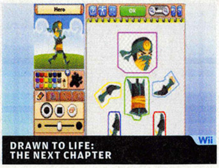
I would love to see a Pokémon game that takes multiplayer beyond trading and battling. Adventuring with a party of friends would be amazing.

Steve Thomason

Four-player co-op Star Fox would be a blast (you could do synchronized barrel rolls), and it's high time we saw a new installment in that series anyway.



DRAWN TO LIFE: THE NEXT CHAPTER



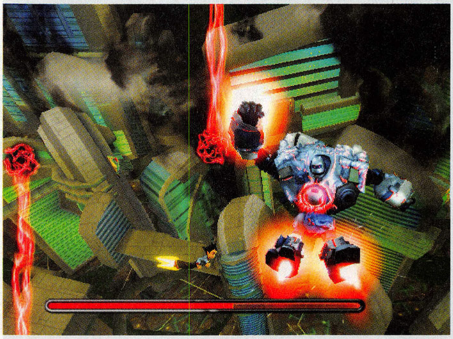
DRAWN TO LIFE: THE NEXT CHAPTER

DRAWN TO LIFE: THE NEXT CHAPTER

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **PLANET MOON**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Though the Wii console version of Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter is the series's first installment on the system, it's familiar territory for anyone who's played its DS predecessors; it's a solid platformer that's made a lot more interesting due to the ability to create your character and oodles of other in-game content. The customization aspect is easily the game's biggest strength; you make your own hero, your vehicles, your items, your weapons, and all kinds of in-level objects, from floating platforms to conveyor belts to background scenery. The art editor provides plenty of tools to effectively let your creativity run wild; if you take the time, you can make some pretty detailed designs (although doing so with the Wii Remote controller isn't quite as natural as doing it with a touch screen). If you don't want to be Rembrandt you can just use premade templates, but that kind of ignores the point of the game, especially since the other half of the equation—the platforming action—isn't quite as precise as in other games in the genre. Fortunately, nifty level-specific gimmicks (a tail hook, wings, ice skates, climbing claws, etc.) and the ability to draw on-the-fly interactive platforms in select parts of each stage keep things interesting, if unspectacular. —CHRIS H.



Nice Moves, Kid

ASTRO BOY: THE VIDEO GAME

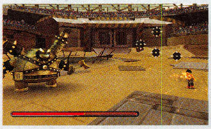
RATING: 7.5

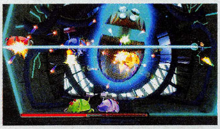
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **D3PUBLISHER**
DEVELOPER: **HIGH VOLTAGE SOFTWARE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

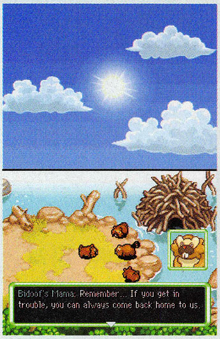
The Astro Boy property is the very definition of *classic*, so it's appropriate that the Wii adaptation (based on this fall's CG flick) relies on equally classic gameplay. If you enjoy old-school 2-D gaming, you'll find a lot to like here. Astro Boy's action/platforming stages make great use of the titular hero's powers—such as air dashes, an arm cannon, a finger laser, and butt-mounted machine guns—and when you're deftly using these moves (as well as standard punches, kicks, and throws) to evade enemy attacks, knock foes from the sky, and unleash superattacks that bust enemies into bolts, it's quite satisfying.

The game does a nice job limiting your supermoves; you're given enough to get the job done in style, but not so many that you can just run around carelessly unleashing attacks everywhere you go (especially since using a supermove to absorb enemy bullets is the only way to regain health). The stages are well-designed, too, with time-tested obstacles such as moving platforms, spiked walls, and bottomless pits, plus hidden upgrades that boost your abilities. The autoscrolling shooter levels are more straightforward—you pretty much just shoot and dodge—but they do the trick and add variety.

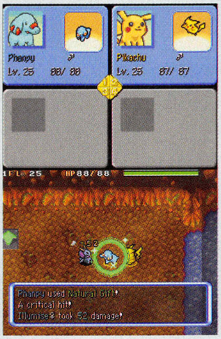
Though all the fundamentals are solid, details such as recovery time, enemy reactions, and boss battles could have used some more polish; the game certainly isn't as finely tuned as the fantastic 2004 GBA game Astro Boy: Omega Factor (then again, few games are). Perhaps more problematic are the game's visuals. Low-res textures, simple geometry, and poor lip-syncing make the title look decidedly last-gen. Look past the rough exterior, however, and you'll find a fun game with retro appeal. —CHRIS H.



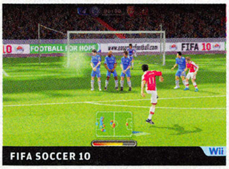


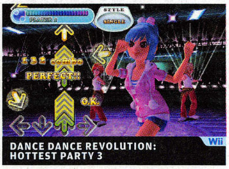


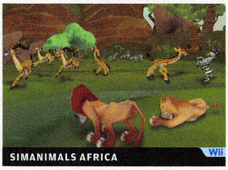
Bidoof's Mama: Remember... If you get in trouble, you can always come back home to us.

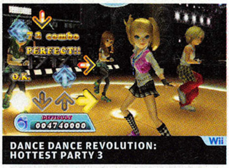


Phanpy used Natural Gift!
A critical hit!
Illumise took 52 damage!


FIFA SOCCER 10


DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION: HOTTEST PARTY 3


SIMANIMALS AFRICA


DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION: HOTTEST PARTY 3

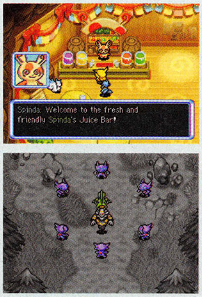
Over and Above

POKÉMON MYSTERY DUNGEON: EXPLORERS OF SKY

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **THE POKÉMON COMPANY, CHUNSOFT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky equals or exceeds its twin predecessors (Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Time and Explorers of Darkness) to deliver the best Pokémon Mystery Dungeon experience to date. The most notable addition to this younger but bigger sibling is the inclusion of Special Episodes, each presenting a scenario that features new playable Pokémon characters from the story, deeper insight into the backgrounds of favorite characters and the main story thread, and significant challenges in some of the game's largest and most interesting dungeons. Other welcome touches are communication features, such as rescuing a friend (or being rescued by a friend, who must also have the game) via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, and the smart inclusion of backward-compatible trading with Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Time and Explorers of Darkness, which greatly expands your trading possibilities. Small changes in the main game, such as the appearance of Spinda's Café, add additional playability and depth to the experience. For Pokémon fans, if you've not played the previous two Pokémon Mystery Dungeon titles, this is definitely the version to get. The harder choice awaits Pokémon Mystery Dungeon veterans who might be wondering if the changes are significant enough to warrant further investment. If you're the type of player who milks a game for all that it's worth, then you'll likely enjoy Explorers of Sky's new content, but more-casual players might wonder what all the fuss is about. **—SCOTT P.**



Spinda: Welcome to the fresh and friendly Spinda's Juice Bar!

FIFA SOCCER 10

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA CANADA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Like Madden before it, this year's Wii edition of FIFA has been rebuilt from the ground up. That means stylized character models and new arcade-inspired play mechanics such as the Momentum meter, which lets you perform better trick moves and makes your shots more difficult to block. FIFA 10 is definitely snappier than previous installments as a result, but it doesn't go far enough. The action isn't nearly as over-the-top as something like Mario Strikers or EA's own FIFA Street, yet the developers have stripped out most of the sim elements. What we're left with falls in sort of an awkward middle ground, and though it's far from terrible, I'm not sure why anyone would choose it over some of the alternatives. **—STEVE T.**

SIMANIMALS AFRICA

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **THE SIMS STUDIO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

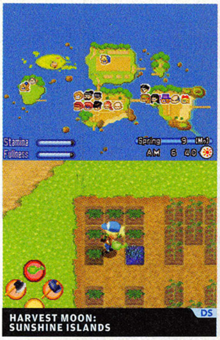
In many ways, this sequel is a lot simpler than the original SimAnimals, and it's a more cohesive experience for it. The interface feels less cumbersome to boot, and the presentation, though far from spectacular, is significantly improved. Unfortunately, the game still isn't terribly compelling. Your interactions with the exotic wildlife are pretty mundane, and a handful of waggle-centric minigames does little to spice things up. Even a younger audience is going to lose interest after being forced to pet a gazelle for the 100th time. Plus, I know it's the circle of life and all, but kids will probably get pretty upset when the baby giraffe they just spent the last half hour befriending is eaten by a lion. **—STEVE T.**

DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION: HOTTEST PARTY 3

RATING: 6.5

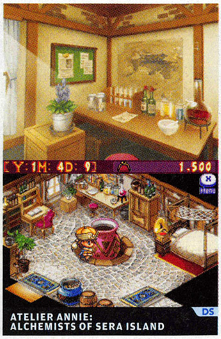
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **BEMANI**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

This release is exactly what you'd expect from the third DDR offering for Wii in three years. The track list is a great mix of old and new, with pop hits from artists ranging from Rick Astley to Rihanna, along with a variety of more traditional DDR dance tracks. The main addition is a new mode that uses the Wii Balance Board accessory, in which you stand and wiggle your hips to the arrows and punch with the remote and Nunchuk. It all functions adequately and adds welcome variety, but it feels like a novelty compared to the tried-and-true dance mat (which you can still use, thankfully). Of course, plenty of multiplayer options abound to share with up to three friends, but if you're playing alone your best bet is Tournament mode, where you battle against CPU opponents to win the DDR nationals. **—CAROLYN G.**



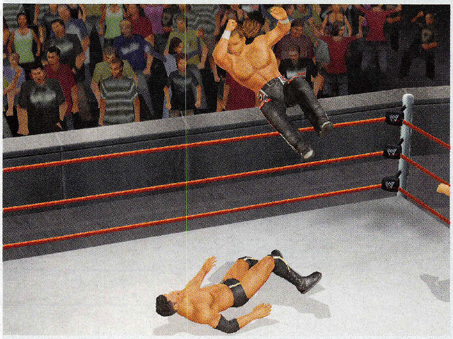
HARVEST MOON: SUNSHINE ISLANDS

DS



ATELIER ANNIE: ALCHEMISTS OF SERA ISLAND

DS



HARVEST MOON: SUNSHINE ISLANDS

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NATSUME**
DEVELOPER: **NATSUME**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

It's become obvious that minor tweaks to the Harvest Moon formula are no longer enough. It's time for a major rethinking of the series. Not that there's anything technically wrong with Sunshine Islands, nor is it egregious for franchise games to be similar to each other, but there's just nothing new in this one to distinguish it from its predecessors.

You're once again a neophyte farmer looking to build an agricultural empire, and along the way meet some new friends and maybe raise a family. It feels like the requirements to expand your farm have been ratcheted up, though; the amount of crops you have to sell and the amount of wood you need to forage seems outrageously high for even the simplest additions to your ranch. Even the duties you can do to augment your income, such as fishing and collecting wild fruit, seem to take longer and have less payoff than before.

Fortunately, Sunshine Islands has a better understanding than previous handheld Harvest Moons of how to efficiently use the DS platform. Both screens are put to good use, and you can either touch the bottom screen or use the Control Pad for virtually all controls. But this latest Harvest Moon title seemingly refuses to go beyond these basic abilities of the DS, particularly regarding wireless connectivity. So much could be gained by letting people visit each other, share crops and ingredients, or whatever else smarter minds than mine could come up with. **—CHRIS SH.**

ATELIER ANNIE: ALCHEMISTS OF SERA ISLAND

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NIS AMERICA**
DEVELOPER: **GUST**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

There's something to be said for an RPG that is not about saving the world. This is an RPG about craftsmanship, small-business management, and real-estate development, albeit with a modest side order of chopping up monsters.

Developer Gust makes it work, as they have in so many other "Atelier [whoever]" games. There are lots of things to do here—explore the wilderness, gather alchemy ingredients, make stuff in your chemist's cauldron, manage a theme park-style project to revive Sera Island's tourism business—but you rarely *have* to do anything in particular at any given time. Simple, user-friendly systems for combat and crafting match the breezy pace, and as per usual for the series, the artwork is frighteningly cute. Given that it's certainly no epic, globe-spanning adventure, you'd be surprised how absorbing Atelier can be. **—DAVID S.**

Fully Loaded

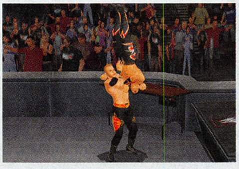
WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2010

RATING: 7.5

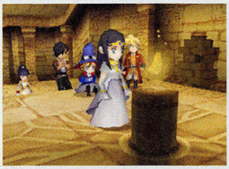
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **YUKE'S**
ESRB: **TEEN**

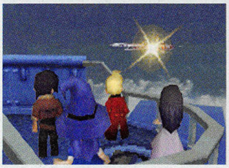
I've got to hand it to the folks at THQ and Yuke's—with WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010, they've managed to create the biggest, most ambitious, most feature-rich wrestling game on Wii (and most likely ever on a Nintendo console). It's got tons of characters, moves, and match types, as well as some ridiculously rich customization options. The new WWE story creator is especially cool—the possibilities are virtually endless and it could keep you busy for months by itself. The in-ring action is as solid as ever; as is typical for the series, it provides a great balance of strikes, grapples, and counterattacks.

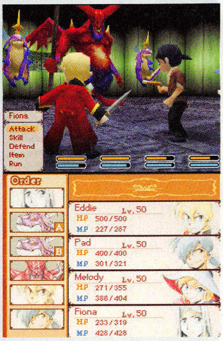
But while there's way more content in SVR2010 than in last year's version, a lot of it simply isn't as polished. Take the controls, for example: though the new deeper, more simlike configuration offers far more possibilities than last year's edition, the controls are almost too complex, and you shouldn't even try playing without a GameCube or Classic Controller. (It's also too bad the motion controls were removed for taunts and wrestler entrances.) Other aspects are equally mixed bags. The refurbished 30-man Royal Rumble mode is a blast thanks to new mechanics that make the mode fun instead of frustrating, but such care wasn't put into other specialty matches, such as the Championship Scramble or the Money in the Bank ladder match, which are chaotic rather than enjoyable. The Road to WrestleMania mode is one of the meatiest parts of the game, yet there are several instances of unclear goals, and the stories simply aren't as interesting as those in last year's game. The omission of online functionality is a bummer, too; I can take or leave online play, but not being able to share custom characters or stories is a letdown.

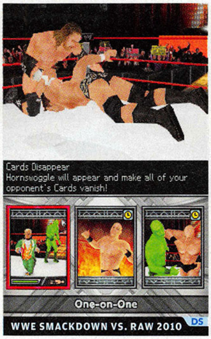


There's a lot of good stuff in SmackDown vs. Raw 2010, but more attention to detail could have made it great. **—CHRIS H.**

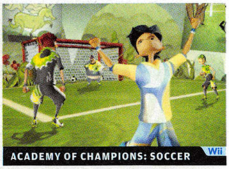


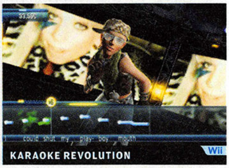





Cards Disappear
Hornswoggle will appear and make all of your opponent's Cards vanish!

WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2010 DS


ACADEMY OF CHAMPIONS: SOCCER Wii


KARAOKE REVOLUTION Wii

Calm Winds

NOSTALGIA

RATING: 7.0

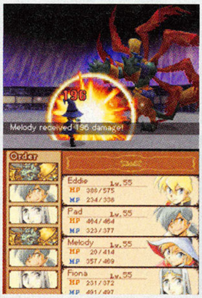
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **IGNITION**
DEVELOPER: **RED ENTERTAINMENT/TECMO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Nostalgia is an aptly titled game. Players who are bound to get the most enjoyment out of it are those who are filled with nostalgia for classic RPGs from the 16-bit era. The characters are your standard RPG archetypes, and the plot the typical fare. Despite the clichés, the setting—alternative, steampunk versions of real-life cities—keeps things somewhat interesting. Even the relatively simplistic polygon characters look charmingly retro.

While exploring dungeons, success in the turn-based battles requires keeping a close watch on the attack order that's shown on the bottom screen. This, coupled with a nice variety of enemies, makes for exciting battles. You move around the world map in an airship, which can also fall under attack. One might expect these battles to play out quite differently from the character fights, but that isn't the case. It's the same old combat as usual, except your party members now man the ship's weapons instead of using their standard attacks. These airship battles are significantly tougher than those in dungeons, so powering up your ship is a must.

This is done via skill points, which is the game's method of allowing you to customize your party with new powers. Each character's skill tree unlocks new techniques as you spend points on existing skills. Unfortunately, there is no indication of how close you are to earning a new skill, which means you spend points like crazy with the hope that something new will eventually appear.

Nostalgia can be a bit too old-fashioned for its own good. The gameplay is extremely typical of the genre, and the story is so derivative that you stop caring about it after a few hours. Still, it's a decent adventure with a wealth of side quests to lengthen the experience. **—PHIL T.**


Melody received 196 damage!

WWE SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW 2010

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **YUKE'S**
ESRB: **TEEN**

THQ seems to have given up on making a stylus-driven wrestling sim, and that's probably the right decision. The 2010 edition of SmackDown for the DS plays more or less like you'd expect it to play on any other system, which is to say that it ain't half bad.

It has the controls that we've grown familiar with over the years, a versatile create-a-wrestler system, and a story mode with some fun ways to fill the time between matches. (Morbid-minded wrestling fans may enjoy the chance to torture their Superstar with dozens of Hindu squats.) SmackDown being SmackDown, it also has a lot of the quirks we're familiar with—unpredictable collision detection is the big one—but it works fundamentally, which means it's a big improvement on last year's game. **—DAVID S.**

ACADEMY OF CHAMPIONS: SOCCER

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT VANCOUVER**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

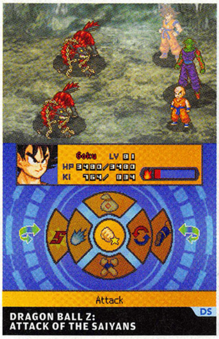
Combine elements from Mario Strikers (the arcadey gameplay) and the Harry Potter franchise (Hogwarts), and you get Academy of Champions: Soccer. The result isn't quite as good as either of its inspirations, but it is solid, if a bit too easy. The lack of challenge is understandable, of course, as the game is geared toward younger gamers, but having an option to increase the difficulty level would've been welcome. Still, assembling a five-person team by recruiting new players—including a handful of Ubisoft characters, such as Rayman and Sam Fisher—and upgrading existing ones is entertaining. Obviously, Academy of Champions: Soccer is not a game for hardcore footie fans, but those looking for a pick-up-and-play soccer game should give it a try. **—JUSTIN C.**

KARAOKE REVOLUTION

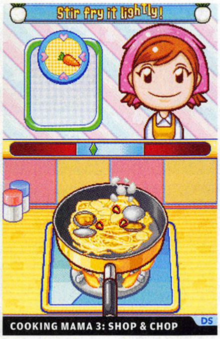
RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **BLITZ GAMES**
ESRB: **TEEN**

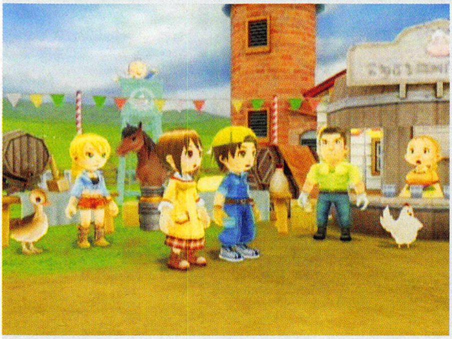
Karaoke Revolution is in kind of a weird place. On one hand, it's a thoroughly competent game with a reasonable number of tracks and decent customization features, and the game does a great job recognizing tone and pitch. On the other hand, games like Rock Band and Guitar Hero are already on the market, offering karaoke modes and a whole lot more. The other issue with Karaoke Revolution is its musical selection; as always, a karaoke game is only as good as its song list. If you want to sing recent Top 40 hits and/or The Jackson 5, you'll probably be happy, but if you have more diverse interests, you'll probably find only a few songs to enjoy. **—CHRIS H.**



DRAGON BALL Z: ATTACK OF THE SAIYANS



COOKING MAMA 3: SHOP & CHOP



DRAGON BALL Z: ATTACK OF THE SAIYANS

RATING: **8.0**

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO BANDAI GAMES**
DEVELOPER: **MONOLITH SOFT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Some might say Monolith Soft has gone slumming here. They once made a few of the most ambitious RPGs in the business, and ambitious this game isn't, exactly.

What it is, though, is about as good a Dragon Ball Z game as anyone's ever going to make. It's a fine RPG that anybody could enjoy, with a simple, fast-paced battle system and shockingly detailed graphics, but die-hard DBZ fans will appreciate it much, much more. This is, most of all, a game for people who will get the joke when Monster Carrot shows up onscreen.

Yes, he makes an appearance, and so do lots of other not-quite-so-familiar faces. (Not quite so familiar as Goku, anyway.) The game takes place fairly early in the DBZ sagas—Vegeta and Nappa's first landing on Earth provides the climactic encounter— which means there's plenty of room for characters who got squeezed out of the spotlight further on down the line. It doesn't adapt any one long stretch of storyline from the original comics, though. Instead, the adventure skips along through a series of loosely linked short episodes, neatly cutting out any filler in between the famous battles and other memorable moments.

Attack of the Saiyans isn't just a fanboy nostalgia trip, though. It's genuinely fun to play, and Monolith's artists didn't use the hot license as an excuse to slack off. The sprite animation and background artwork would look great in any game, whatever it was based on—it's a real stroke of luck for all the Dragon Ball fans out there. **—DAVID S.**

COOKING MAMA 3: SHOP & CHOP

RATING: **6.0**

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **COOKING MAMA LTD.**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Cooking Mama serves up another stew of culinary-themed, touch-controlled minigames in its third course on the DS, but the recipe needs more spice. Other cooking-related games have delivered an overarching goal—save the restaurant, please the customers—yet Mama sticks to its point-based smorgasbord of food-prep exercises. The Shopping component of the title is a point-and-follow dash through a grocery store for ingredients. Collisions with some patrons trigger minigames, which have you tapping or dragging grocery items. The Cooking Contest sounds promising, but it boils down to a no-fanfare time trial in which you compare your slicing and stirring speeds to those of other players. The minigames are expertly executed, though, and tie in perfectly with real-life cooking activities. It's just that, with three games for DS now in the books, we should be getting fine dining rather than simply more fast food. **—GEORGE S.**

Charming Farming

HARVEST MOON: ANIMAL PARADE

RATING: **7.5**

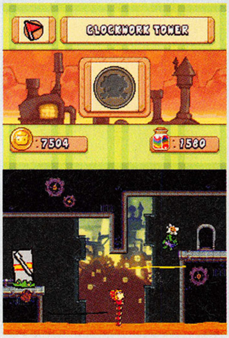
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **NATSUME**
DEVELOPER: **MARVELOUS ENTERTAINMENT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

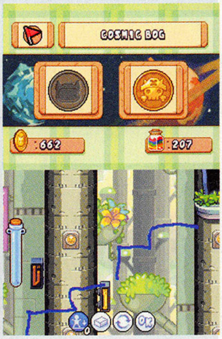
Despite its cutesy appearance, Animal Parade offers a robust and realistic farming-sim experience, complete with growing crops, raising livestock, and engaging in carpentry, mining, logging, cooking, fishing, grinding grains, churning butter...you get the idea. Fans of the Harvest Moon series will feel right at home, and the traditional overarching goals of improving your ranch, marrying, and raising a family are still in place. As the title suggests, however, animals play a more prominent role throughout, and you can tame various wild animals such as boars and bears to keep as pets, as well.

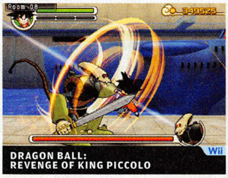
Our favorite aspect of Harvest Moon is the complete freedom you have to do anything you want, in any order you want. How you spend each in-game day (and ultimately, your in-game life) is entirely up to you—there's no right or wrong way to go about it. You could tend to your garden, spend time with your animals, socialize with the townspeople, or just spend all day at the pond fishing, and everything you do would further your progress in some way. This openness is what gives the game its satisfying realness, because you decide everything you do, rather than being forced down a set path.

When you spend so much time and effort building an impressive ranch and home, though, you have a desire to share it and show it off to your friends; otherwise your efforts begin to feel empty. We would have liked to see some online options, like the ability to visit friends' ranches, or at the very least the option to send gifts back and forth. **—CAROLYN G.**

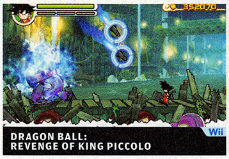
6:10
Help
Use



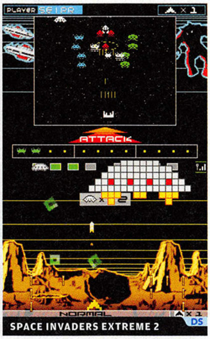




DRAGON BALL: REVENGE OF KING PICCOLO



DRAGON BALL: REVENGE OF KING PICCOLO



SPACE INVADERS EXTREME 2

Do It Yourself

DRAWN TO LIFE: THE NEXT CHAPTER

RATING: **8.0**

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **5TH CELL**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

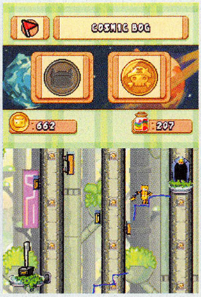
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter allows players to revel in their creativity. This sequel to the 2007 original is a platform game with a twist. Using the stylus and touch screen, you get to create the main character, your weapons, and many other objects within the world.

If you ever wanted to play a game where Optimus Prime bonks enemies with a giant turkey leg while hopping across floating toothbrushes, then here's your chance to make it. Those who played the previous game will notice that the drawing tool has been refined, allowing for more colors and easier use.

Likewise, the gameplay has been improved. The new weapon system allows you to carry and use different types of armaments (a gun, a sword, or a yo-yo-type device) that can be upgraded as you earn coins. There are also more items to interact with and occasional puzzle elements, granting more variety to the levels. This is a relatively slow-paced platformer that encourages exploration, though, so those looking for fast action might be disappointed.

The plot is a continuation of that in the first game; you find your custom hero and his friends trying to restore color to the world after it has been stolen by the evil Wilfre. This simple premise expands into a fairly elaborate tale that can be surprisingly touching at times, but it frequently seems that the noninteractive plot elements take precedence over the actual gameplay.

Even so, The Next Chapter is a delightful game. It's not overly difficult, so younger players might get the most out of it, but the novelty of seeing your creations come to life is a treat for all ages. —**PHIL T.**



DRAGON BALL: REVENGE OF KING PICCOLO

RATING: **6.5**

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO BANDAI**
DEVELOPER: **MEDIA VISION**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

For those already familiar with the pre-Z Dragon Ball, Revenge of King Piccolo is a nice refresher, allowing you to play through the highlights from the manga/anime. The narrative can feel a bit disjointed for series newbies, but all you really need to know is that you're the monkey-tailed Goku and you fight—a lot. Oddly, though, this title is best when you're outside of one-on-one battles in the platforming-centric levels. This is partially because the platforming is fun and provides some welcome variety, but also because of the simplicity of the combat itself and the uneven difficulty of the bosses. It's a shame that Revenge of King Piccolo becomes essentially a mediocre fighting game in the latter part of the adventure. —**JUSTIN C.**

SPACE INVADERS EXTREME 2

RATING: **8.0**

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **SQUARE ENIX**
DEVELOPER: **TAITO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Not radically different from last year's Space Invaders reboot, Extreme 2 offers new enemy formations and bosses, a Time Attack mode, and branching levels. The flashy backgrounds are a tad distracting, but they succeed in raising the entertainment value. The alien-shooting action in the foreground is manic, but manageable. When you merit a chance to enter Fever Time (by color-coordinating your attacks), enemies pour onto the top screen, challenging you to shoot past the hordes on the lower screen to knock out the high-flying forces before time runs out. Crack the key to Fever Time, and you'll soon up the action ante by launching into high-scoring Bingo Time. The blown-up and pixilated versions of the classic Invaders that rule boss stages provide a break from the sensory overload, and add variations in shooter strategy. —**GEORGE S.**

FIGHTING FANTASY: THE WARLOCK OF FIRETOP MOUNTAIN

MARVEL ULTIMATE ALLIANCE 2

5 /40pts
Level 6
89
Wii

Wii FIT PLUS

UNDERCITY SECRET
NORMAL
SCORE
260
C
SCORE
390
S
MAX COMBO 6

3 HITS !
7 HITS !!

FIGHTING FANTASY: THE WARLOCK OF FIRETOP MOUNTAIN

RATING: 4.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **ASPYR MEDIA**
DEVELOPER: **BIG BLUE BUBBLE**
ESRB: **TEEN**

If you know what *Fighting Fantasy* used to mean, you'll be surprised what you get from this game. Chances are you don't, though—Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone's "role-playing novels" went out of style more than 20 years ago.

The DS Fighting Fantasy doesn't keep much more than the name from its namesake. It's an old-fashioned first-person RPG, like Deep Labyrinth or King's Field, and while it's well made within its limitations, it's still pretty limited. Moving and interacting with the 3-D world is easy enough, but combat is a lot more tedious and repetitive than it should be, and the difficulty progression seems way out of whack sometimes. It's no fun facing monsters that are suddenly too tough to kill. **—DAVID S.**

MARVEL ULTIMATE ALLIANCE 2

RATING: 5.5

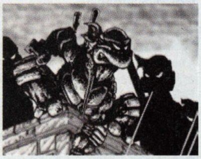
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **N-SPACE**
ESRB: **TEEN**

For longtime Marvel fans like myself, the Ultimate Alliance series holds an undeniable appeal. Where else can you assemble your very own dream team from more than 25 of the brand's greatest superheroes (and villains)? Sadly, this sequel is decidedly unsuper once you get beyond the character-select screen. Reeking of a quick-and-dirty Wii port, the game is hampered by clumsy controls, bland level design, muddy visuals, and ultrasimplistic AI. The story, a scattershot melding of the recent *Secret War* and *Civil War* comic-book arcs, doesn't fare much better, and some of the voice acting sounds downright amateur. As always, four-player co-op makes things more enjoyable, but you may have a hard time roping friends into this lackluster alliance. **—STEVE T.**

ALSO THIS MONTH

Nintendo's **Wii Fit Plus** is out now, providing more workout options than the original and more minigame goodness.... We didn't get Konami's **Silent Hill: Shattered Memories** (Wii), Ubisoft's **Shaun White Snowboarding: World Stage** (Wii), or Ubisoft's **Rabbids Go Home** (Wii, DS) in time for this issue, so look for reviews next month.... Don't dismiss D3Publisher's **The Secret Saturdays: Beasts of the 5th Sun** (Wii/DS) as a licensed cash-in; it's got some cool platforming and puzzle elements.... Activision's **Bakugan Battle Brawlers** (Wii/DS) delivers the popular toy/card game in digital form. Nonfans can pass.... Destineer's squad-based FPS **Marines: Modern Urban Combat** (Wii) features authentic military tactics, but the frame rate and controls need work.... Check out Konami's **WireWay** (DS) if you're looking for a different breed of platformer.

Turtle Power Outage



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES: ARCADE ATTACK

RATING: 4.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

If you're wondering why games based on licenses such as movies and comic books get a bad rap, look no further than Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Arcade Attack. The pizza-grubbing ninjas have had their fair share of lousy licensed titles, and once again, the shelled heroes get shelled by a yucky game that bears their name.

TMNT: Arcade Attack is a side-scrolling beat-'em-up reminiscent of the classic TMNT arcade game. You progress through construction sites, across rooftops, and through every other standard city level, brawling against legions of funny-dressing enemies. That's it. There's no platforming, no puzzle solving, no backtracking, no nothing: you just work your way across the stage until it abruptly ends. *Sometimes* you'll get an interesting boss fight, which in this game feels like hot cocoa on a cold day.

If the scores of same-looking enemies weren't enough to make this game lull you to sleep, your move list certainly is; it's comprised of wielding your weapon, kicking, blocking, and occasionally throwing (although the latter is really hard to pull off due to iffy play control). There aren't any special moves to speak of, and no intricate button combos, just flat mashing and dodging over and over. And the four turtle brothers seem to have no distinguishing characteristics besides their weapon and their headband color.

The story is told through comic-book-style cut-scenes in between levels. It feels like the story took about 10 minutes to write, edit, and publish, but it doesn't matter much because what you're doing during gameplay has absolutely no bearing on the plot. But at least the art style of the cut-scenes is nice.

If you have a buddy and you're not sure how much he likes you, you can always test his patience and friendship with co-op mode, the one significant multiplayer aspect to Arcade Attack. **—CHRIS SH.**

[REVIEWS ARCHIVE]

These Go to 11

Last issue, we had a whole 11 pages of reviews goodness. Well, it was mostly goodness, anyway; 15 of the 24 games that we reviewed scored a 7.0 or higher. Even more impressive is the fact that three of these games—The Beatles: Rock Band for Wii, as well as Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days and Scribblenauts for Nintendo DS—scored a rare 9.0.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.

Wii

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
AC/DC Live: Rock Band Track Pack	N/A	MTV Games	237	T
The Beatles: Rock Band	9.0	MTV Games	247	T
The Bigs 2	6.0	2K Sports	244	E10+
Boom Blox Bash Party	8.0	Electronic Arts	243	E
A Boy and His Blob	8.5	Majesco	247	E
Broken Sword: Shadow of the Templars—The Director's Cut	7.0	Ubisoft	241	T
Call of Duty: World at War	8.0	Activision	237	M
Cars Race O Rama	N/A	THQ	247	E
Cate West: The Vanishing Files	N/A	Destineer	240	E10+
The Conduit	8.0	Sega	243	T
Cursed Mountain	7.0	Deep Silver	246	M
Dead Rising: Chop Till You Drop	N/A	Capcom	240	M
Dead Space Extraction	8.0	Electronic Arts	247	M
Deadly Creatures	7.5	THQ	239	T
Deca Sports 2	N/A	Hudson	247	E
Destiny of Zorro	2.5	505	243	E10+
DiRT 2	4.5	Codemasters	247	E10+
Don King Boxing	5.5	2K Sports	241	T
Excitebots: Trick Racing	8.0	Nintendo	241	E
Family Fun Football	4.5	Tecmo	247	E
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time	6.0	Square Enix	240	E10+
Fishing Master: World Tour	7.5	Hudson	238	E
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	7.5	Atari	243	E10+
G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra	5.0	Electronic Arts	246	T
Grand Slam Tennis	7.5	Electronic Arts	243	E
Guilty Gear XX Accent Core Plus	7.5	Aksys	241	T
Guitar Hero 5	8.0	Activision	247	T
Guitar Hero Metallica	N/A	Activision	240	T
Guitar Hero Smash Hits	N/A	Activision	243	T
Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince	5.5	Electronic Arts	244	E10+
Help Wanted	4.5	Hudson	242	E10+
The House of the Dead: Overkill	8.0	Sega	239	M
Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings	7.5	LucasArts	243	T
Ju-On: The Grudge	6.0	XSEED	247	M
Klonoa	9.0	Namco Bandai	241	E10+
Let's Tap	7.0	Sega	243	E
Little King's Story	9.0	XSEED	244	T
Madden NFL 10	8.0	Electronic Arts	245	E
MadWorld	9.0	Sega	240	M
Major League Baseball 2K9	6.0	2K Sports	240	E
Major Minor's Majestic March	6.0	Majesco	241	E
Marble Saga: Kororinpa	7.5	Hudson	240	E
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games	7.0	Sega	247	E
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	N/A	Activision	247	T
Metroid Prime Trilogy	N/A	Nintendo	245	T
Mini Ninjas	7.5	Eidos	247	E10+
MotoGP	4.0	Capcom	240	E
The Munchables	7.0	Namco Bandai	243	E
Muramasa: The Demon Blade	8.0	Ignition	246	T
MySims Agents	7.0	Electronic Arts	247	E
MySims Party	5.0	Electronic Arts	240	E
MySims Racing	N/A	Electronic Arts	243	E
NASCAR Kart Racing	6.0	EA Sports	238	E
NBA 2K10	6.0	2K Sports	247	E
Neighborhood Games	N/A	THQ	238	E
New Play Control! Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	N/A	Nintendo	242	E10+
New Play Control! Mario Power Tennis	N/A	Nintendo	239	E
New Play Control! Pikmin	N/A	Nintendo	239	E
NHL 2K10	8.0	2K Sports	246	E10+
Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian: The Video Game	N/A	Majesco	242	E10+
Onechanbara: Bikini Zombie Slayers	6.5	D3Publisher	240	M
Overlord: Dark Legend	7.0	Codemasters	244	T
Phantom Brave: We Meet Again	8.0	NIS America	243	T
Pro Evolution Soccer 2009	N/A	Konami	240	E
Punch-Out!!	8.5	Nintendo	242	E10+
Quantum of Solace	5.0	Activision	237	T
Ready 2 Rumble Revolution	5.0	Atari	240	T
Reel Fishing: Angler's Dream	N/A	Natsume	243	E
Resident Evil Archives	N/A	Capcom	244	M
Rock Band 2	9.0	MTV Games	237	T
Rock Band Track Pack Volume 2	N/A	MTV Games	237	T
Rune Factory Frontier	7.5	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	240	E10+
Samurai Shodown Anthology	N/A	SNK Playmore	242	T
Scooby-Doo! First Frights	N/A	Warner Bros.	247	E10+
SimAnimals	N/A	Electronic Arts	238	E
Skate It	6.0	Electronic Arts	237	E
Sonic and the Black Knight	8.0	Sega	239	E10+
Spectrobes: Origins	5.5	Disney	246	E10+
Spore Hero	7.0	Electronic Arts	247	E10+
Spyborgs	7.5	Capcom	247	T
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes	N/A	LucasArts	247	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Smash-Up	7.5	Ubisoft	247	E10+
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	7.0	Ubisoft	238	M
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	9.0	Electronic Arts	243	E
Tornado Outbreak	6.5	Konami	247	E10+
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen	5.5	Activision	245	T
Ultimate Shooting Collection	N/A	UFO	237	E
Up	6.5	THQ	242	E

REVIEWER NOTES

MADWORLD

If ever a game deserved its Mature rating, it's MadWorld. This game is crude, crass, and bloody to the core. I'd actually be offended if it weren't for the intentionally over-the-top humorous presentation and the fact this is actually a very artistic game—it's as much about making a social statement as it is about brutally beating up bad guys. The action itself is solid fun, with responsive controls and tons of crazy ways to bring the pain. **—CHRIS H.**

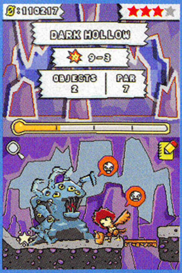
KINGDOM HEARTS 358/2 DAYS

It gets off to a slow start, but 358/2 Days more than makes up for it with an intensely touching conclusion. If you're the sentimental type, keep some tissues handy. **—STEVE T.**

DEAD SPACE EXTRACTION

Yes, it's an on-rails light-gun game, but don't let that turn you off from playing the impressive Dead Space Extraction (assuming you're old enough, that is, as it's a Mature-rated title). The "strategic dismemberment"-heavy gameplay is certainly fun, especially when playing cooperatively, but it's the strong characters and narrative that make Extraction great. **—JUSTIN C.**

Valhalla Knights: Eldar Saga	4.0	XSEED	246	T
Virtua Tennis 2009	7.0	Sega	244	E
We Ski and Snowboard	6.5	Namco Bandai	239	E
Wii Sports Resort	8.5	Nintendo	245	E
WordJong Party	N/A	Destineer	238	E
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	5.0	Activision	243	T
NINTENDO DS				
Ant Nation	2.0	Konami	245	E
Avalon Code	8.5	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	240	E10+
Big Bang Mini	8.5	SouthPeak	237	E
Black Sigil: Blade of the Exiled	5.0	Graffiti	242	E
Bleach: The 3rd Phantom	4.0	Sega	246	T
Blue Dragon Plus	8.0	Ignition	239	E
Boing! Docomodake DS	7.0	Ignition	239	E
Broken Sword: Shadow of the Templar–The Director's Cut	N/A	Ubisoft	240	T
Cake Mania 3	N/A	Majesco	247	E
Cars Race O Rama	N/A	THQ	247	E
The Chase: Felix Meets Felicity	5.0	Atari	238	E
C.O.R.E.	5.5	Graffiti	242	M
The Dark Spire	5.0	Atlus	241	E10+
Dawn of Discovery	8.5	Ubisoft	244	E
Dokapon Journey	4.0	Atlus	241	E10+
Don King Boxing	N/A	2K Sports	240	T
Dragon Quest V: Hand of the Heavenly Bride	8.5	Square Enix	239	E
Elebits: The Adventures of Kai and Zero	7.0	Konami	237	E
Emergency! Disaster Rescue Squad	N/A	Destineer	240	E10+
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time	6.5	Square Enix	240	E10+
Fire Emblem: Shadow Dragon	8.5	Nintendo	239	E10+
Flower, Sun, and Rain	6.0	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	240	T
Fossil Fighters	8.0	Nintendo	246	E
Gardening Mama	8.0	Majesco	240	E
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	N/A	Atari	243	E
G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra	5.0	Electronic Arts	245	E10+
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	9.0	Rockstar	241	M
Guitar Hero On Tour: Decades	7.0	Activision	237	E10+
Guitar Hero On Tour: Modern Hits	7.0	Activision	244	E10+
Harvest Moon: Frantic Farming	8.0	Natsume	243	E
Henry Hatsworth in the Puzzling Adventure	8.0	Electronic Arts	240	E
Hero's Saga: Laevatein Tactics	7.0	Aksys	247	T
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey	4.0	505	246	E10+
Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings	N/A	LucasArts	243	T
Jake Hunter Detective Story: Memories of the Past	6.0	Aksys	242	T
Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days	9.0	Square Enix	247	E10+
Knights in the Nightmare	8.0	Atlus	243	T
Legacy of Ys: Books I & II	7.5	Atlus	238	T
The Legendary Starfy	7.0	Nintendo	243	E
LEGO Battles	5.0	Warner Bros.	243	E
The Lord of the Rings: Conquest	5.0	Electronic Arts	238	E10+
Lux-Pain	4.0	Ignition	240	T
Magician's Quest: Mysterious Times	7.5	Konami	242	E10+
Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story	9.5	Nintendo	246	E
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games	8.0	Sega	247	E
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	N/A	Activision	247	E10+
Mega Man Star Force 3: Red Joker/Black Ace	6.0	Capcom	244	E
Miami Law	3.0	Hudson	243	T
Might & Magic: Clash of Heroes	8.5	Ubisoft	247	E10+
Mini Ninjas	6.0	Eidos	247	E10+
My DoItAll	N/A	Tomy	239	E
My World, My Way	7.0	Atlus	239	E
MySims Agents	N/A	Electronic Arts	247	E
MySims Party	N/A	Electronic Arts	240	E
MySims Racing	N/A	Electronic Arts	243	E
Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Council 4	5.0	Tomy	243	E10+
Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Destiny 2	7.0	Tomy	247	T
Overlord Minions	7.0	Codemasters	244	E10+
Peggle Dual Shot	8.5	PopCap	240	E
Personal Trainer: Cooking	N/A	Nintendo	237	E
Personal Trainer: Math	N/A	Nintendo	239	E
Personal Trainer: Walking	N/A	Nintendo	243	E
Pokémon Platinum Version	9.0	Nintendo	241	E
Prince of Persia: The Fallen King	7.0	Ubisoft	237	E
Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box	8.0	Nintendo	246	E10+
Puzzle Quest: Galactrix	8.0	D3Publisher	240	E10+
Quantum of Solace	6.0	Activision	237	T
Retro Game Challenge	8.0	XSEED	237	RP
Rhythm Heaven	9.0	Nintendo	241	E
Rockin' Pretty	N/A	Aksys	244	E
Roogoo Attack	4.0	SouthPeak	243	E
Rune Factory 2: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	7.0	Natsume	237	E
Scooby-Doo! First Frights	N/A	Warner Bros.	247	E10+
Scribblenauts	9.0	Warner Bros.	247	E10+
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner	8.0	Atlus	244	T
SimAnimals	N/A	Electronic Arts	238	E
Skate It	5.5	Electronic Arts	237	E
Space Bust-A-Move	7.0	Taito	245	E
Spore Hero Arena	5.0	Electronic Arts	247	E
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes	N/A	LucasArts	247	E10+
Steal Princess	6.0	Atlus	241	E10+
Suikoden: Tierkreis	7.0	Konami	240	E10+
Super Robot Taisen OG Saga: Endless Frontier	7.0	Atlus	241	T
Tokyo Beat Down	6.0	Atlus	240	T
Tony Hawk's Motion	4.0	Activision	237	E
Touch Mechanic	5.0	Aspyr	241	E
TrackMania DS	7.0	Atlus	240	E
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen	7.0	Activision	245	E10+
Treasure World	N/A	Aspyr	244	E
Valkyrie Profile: Covenant of the Plume	9.0	Square Enix	240	T
A Witch's Tale	4.0	NIS America	247	E10+
The Wizard of Oz: Beyond the Yellow Brick Road	6.5	XSEED	246	E
World Championship Games	N/A	The Game Factory	240	E
Zubo	6.5	Electronic Arts	240	E10+



SCRIBBLENAUTS

When I first heard about Scribblenauts, I thought it was one of the coolest ideas for a video game ever, but that there was no chance developer 5th Cell could pull it off. I've never been more delighted to be proven wrong. This is a triumph of innovative game design.

—STEVE T.

CHRONO TRIGGER

I was recently at a store and saw that the DS version of Square Enix's classic time-traveling RPG is now selling for a measly $20. Now there's officially no excuse not to own it. —CHRIS H.

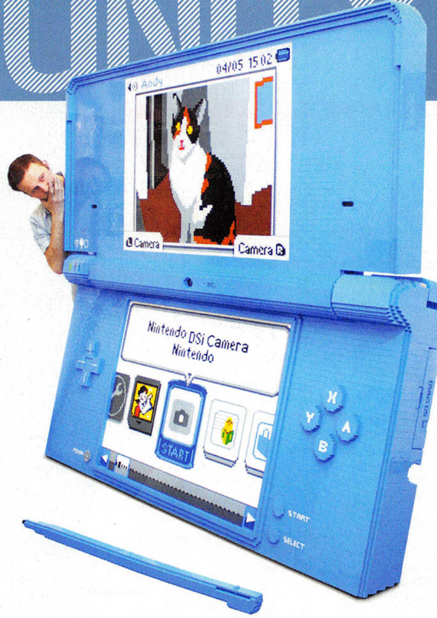
THE BEATLES: ROCK BAND

I've never been a metalhead, so while I've enjoyed past Guitar Hero-type games, their head-banging, air-guitar strumming style was never my thing. But I do love the timeless music of the The Beatles, so The Beatles: Rock Band has allowed me to finally get fully into the groove. I love that the game follows the Fab Four through their career, and I don't miss the other games' create-a-rocker features at all. **—CHRIS SL.**

FANDOM

A Tiny Giant

The biggest and brickiest Nintendo DSi yet.



Over 200 hours, 51,324 LEGO pieces, a little glue, and a ton of patience; that's what it took NYC artist and professional LEGO master Sean Kenney to create this massive sculpture of a Nintendo DSi handheld out of ordinary LEGO blocks. Standing at six and a half feet tall and weighing in at a whopping 250 pounds, this tiny-bricked behemoth was commissioned by Nintendo for the official launch of the system on April 5, 2009 and is among the largest LEGO sculptures Kenney has ever produced.

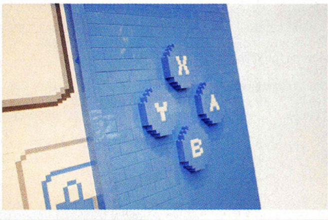
Creating the enormous LEGO replica of Nintendo's latest handheld in meticulous detail on a supertight timeframe was no easy feat. The design process alone took about 20 hours, says Kenney, and the entire project was completed in two weeks. "I worked long days, late nights, and weekends to complete it in time," he says. The finishing touches were put on the Nintendo DSi sculpture at 11:30 p.m. the night before the handheld's official launch. "The final sculpture has giant-sized versions of every detail, from the screws on the battery cover to the electrical contacts in the power port," notes Kenney. "The tiny SD-card slot is over a foot tall."

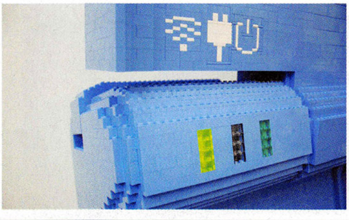
The entire project was designed by hand on custom graph paper, without the aid of computers. Before diving into the production of the sculpture itself, Kenney pored over numerous photographs of the handheld, took hundreds of measurements, sketched out the various components of the DSi, and built prototypes of each part to see how they would work. "I love all the tiny details, like the text, markings, plugs, ports, and screws. They were a lot of fun to design and build," he shares. To ensure its stability, the LEGO version of the Nintendo DSi was build around a steel frame, and the blocks were glued into place one piece at a time. Feedback on the finished piece, which is on display at the Nintendo World Store at Rockefeller Center, has been extremely positive.

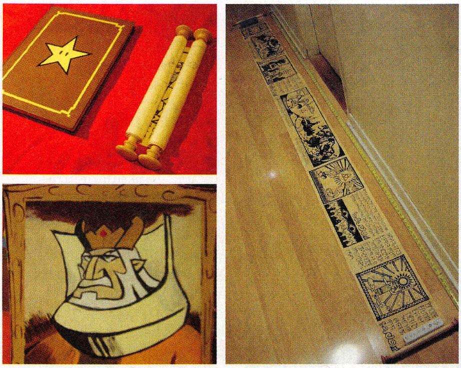
Kenney has been building with LEGO blocks his entire life. He started with small kits at an early age and continued to build increasingly elaborate creations into his adult years. "I would come home from the office every day, take off my tie, and build fun little models, artsy sculptures, and everything from cartoon characters to skyscrapers," he remembers. Playing NES was also a favorite childhood pastime, though Kenney has less time for gaming now that he's made a career out of building LEGO art and sculptures professionally. He adds, "I have fond memories of time spent with Mario and Duck Hunt on the original Nintendo Entertainment System and flipping through Nintendo Power for tips and tricks." **—NATHAN M.**

NINTENDO DSi

See more of Sean Kenney's extraordinary LEGO artwork at http://www.seankenney.com.







FANDOM

Brought to Life

One reader's awesome re-creations of in-game Zelda and Mario artwork.

Have you ever seen an in-game item—a painting, a document, or anything else—that you wish you could have in real life? Chad Erwin Yalung, a 22-year-old college student from San Diego, California, felt that way while playing The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker, as the ancient scroll and Hyrule Castle paintings caught his eye. Yalung, a self-taught artist, chose to make the items himself.

"When I was playing around in the game, I just wanted to have some of the elements present in the game in my own possession as real things, and not just something that shows up on the TV screen every time I wanted to see them," explains Yalung. "You could say I wanted to bring a few of the elements of the game into real life."

To create the paintings, Yalung used the game as a reference, standing Link on a railing on the far side of the castle and zooming in on the artwork with the telescope. The painting of the king was done while Yalung was in high school, but years later, upon finding a large classic frame at a flea market, he decided to paint the much grander portrait of Zelda and her court.

As for the scroll, Yalung found the inspiration from a promotional giveaway item he saw several years ago. "I really wanted one for my Zelda collection, and when I tried to get one for myself, I was disappointed to find I couldn't find any," he shares. "So, rather than accept never having one, I decided to make one."

Yalung started by measuring out an appropriate length of paper, then stained the paper with tea and let it dry in the sun. Using a fluent ink pen, he sketched the images and filled the paper with the text from the in-game version before capping the sticks on each end of the scroll with knobs from an old dresser. Amazingly, it's not the only version of the scroll he's made: an earlier attempt remains incomplete, while another scroll is being considered for display at the San Diego State University library.

The Legend of Zelda is the primary inspiration for Yalung's work—he's also re-created tunics and wooden shields from the series—but it's not the only Nintendo franchise to draw his creative eye. Yalung also crafted a complete version of Rosalina's storybook from Super Mario Galaxy, taking nearly two months to lay out the book as seen in the game and to sketch the images with standard and colored pencils. The cover was then painted with a star to resemble the one Rosalina holds in the game.

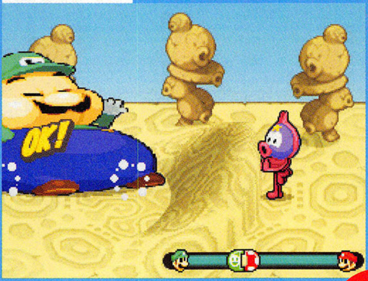
Beyond Zelda and Mario, some of Yalung's favorite game series are Super Smash Bros., Pokémon, and Ace Attorney. He's currently working on various sketches from the Final Fantasy franchise, as well as a portrait of Zelos Wilder from Tales of Symphonia. —ANDREW H.

Screen Test

WRITE *your own* CAPTION

If Volume 246's Wii Sports Resort screenshot taught us anything, it's that Mii characters *can* jump. Check out some of the readers' basketball-related Wii Sports Resort captions below. This time around, we're getting the inside story. On what? We're not exactly sure, but if you have an idea, send a caption to **screentest@nintendopower.com.**

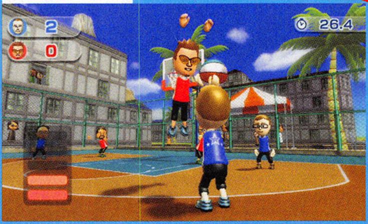
THIS MONTH'S SHOT



Even from inside Luigi's belly, Mario maintains his positive attitude.

Here's our caption. THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER?

VOLUME 246'S SHOT



"Help! My hands are filled with helium!" —CHUCKNORRISKIRBY

"Steve's eyes widened in terror as he realized his $500 glasses were a thing of the past." —ADAM B.

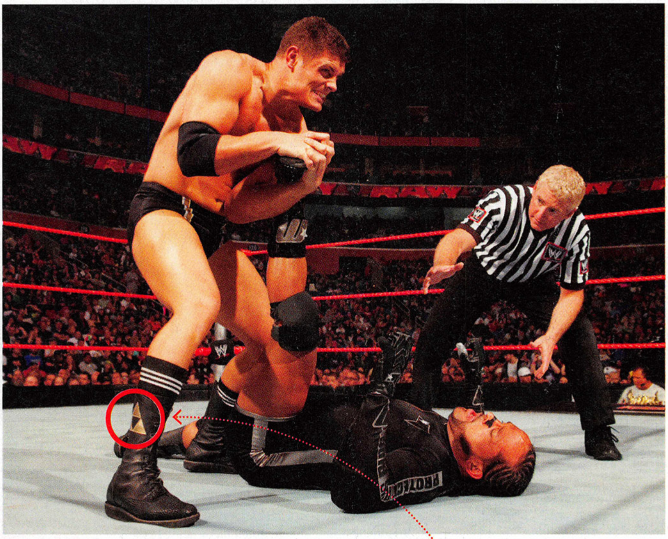
"Sorry I have to leave, but the Justice League needs me. Superman away!" —SWM

"Few defensive tactics are as effective as the ol' face block." —JONATHAN W.

"Marionettes never do well in sports like basketball. They tend to hang by a thread." —FISHERSPOT

ABOVE *and* BEYOND

Got art, cosplay, case mods, etc.? Send them to us via email to **community@nintendopower.com** or via snail mail to Nintendo Power/Community c/o Future US, 4000 Shoreline Court, STE 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. We'll print the best stuff!



INTERVIEW

Legend in the Ring

WWE superstar and diehard Zelda fan **Cody Rhodes** talks about the **Triforce**, his Nintendo habits, and the greatest moments in gaming history.

The Legend of Zelda has millions of fans around the world, but not many who wear that fandom for everyone to see—at least, not in front of a worldwide television audience on a weekly basis. One person who does is WWE wrestler Cody Rhodes (son of wrestling great Dusty Rhodes), who typically wears The Legend of Zelda's iconic Triforce emblem on his boots when he locks up with his opponents on *WWE Raw* (Mondays at 9pm on the USA Network). Cody is a lifelong Zelda fan (and Nintendo Power reader!), so we recently spoke to the young superstar about why he finds the series so legendary. **—CHRIS H.**

NINTENDO POWER Why are the Zelda games so significant to you that you have the Triforce emblem on your boots?

CODY RHODES It's funny, because a lot of guys let on to the fact that they know it's the Triforce, but act like it's a nerdy thing—some of the guys that I work with. But the truth is I grew up in the wizard generation. I grew up around video games. And I wasn't [as] much a child reader as much as I was a game player. The one that sold me has to be The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past, and ever since then I have hankered for whatever Zelda tidbits and major games I get every year. I've told people before: the thing that I thought was cool—and it may sound cheesy or it may not—was the fact that I apply that stuff to my life. I mean, I genuinely do. The power, wisdom, courage—that's a great maxim; it's a great mantra. I genuinely, when I put it on the side of my boots, wanted it to mean those three things.

If you only got to pick one aspect of the Triforce, which one most embodies you: power, wisdom, or courage?

I'd say courage. I'd say I'm not—in my profession, in the sports-entertainment game—I'm not the most wise, and I don't have a quarter of the knowledge that I'm going to obtain by the end of my career. And on the other end, I don't feel like someone who strikes you as a powerful presence. I feel like the underdog, the one who has the courage to push past my own potential.

Just like Link.

And I don't pick it because of that. I really would love to say power, because I'm a Ganondorf fan, but I can't.

Have you played every game in the series?

I've played every console game. I never played Oracle of Ages or Oracle of Seasons. I played every console game ever, including the Master Quest version of Ocarina of Time. I want to say I've finished almost all of them. I saw some of the screenshots of Link on the train for [The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks]. I actually have a DS, so it might be my first handheld go at it.

Which Zelda game is your favorite?

I was trying to think about this, because...I wanted to clearly be able to state which is the best. A Link to the Past is the one I fell in love with as a kid, but I have to say, I think Ocarina of Time is the best game ever made. I put it over Halo and Metal Gear Solid and some games that I really enjoyed. This is crazy, but I was genuinely touched by that game—the whole storyline. So that one is, hands down, the best in my opinion.

What parts of the series are especially memorable to you?

Two in particular, just off the top of my head. The reveal that Sheik was Zelda all along in OOT was really a poignant moment. That was one of those games that everything you went for and worked for, including the side quests, you got a payoff. There was a major payoff. It wasn't something that sets up for a sequel. It has replay value, yes, but even so there's a payoff. That one, and then the tearjerker of game moments: the flute boy from Kakariko Village in A Link to the Past. That's a salient moment, you know? Because you uncover it, and then he's on the little stump, then he vanishes—that's just a cool moment. I genuinely enjoyed that stuff more than books or comics.

Is it true that you still replay A Link to the Past on an annual basis?

Yes, sir. Well, it was true, and it no longer is. Because this past year, I've been very fortunate—WWE has kept me in full go, and I've been all over the world and been given a huge opportunity, and this has been the one year that I haven't been able. Because I don't play the Virtual Console version. I have it, but I still own my SNES, so when I get the chance, I plug the old sucker in, blow it out, and play that one. I will get around to starting a new quest, but I've been, fortunately, not able to with...the things that we've been doing on television. It's kept us really busy.

Are there any other classic game series that you hold in especially high regard?
Me and my close friends—we just found out the hard way that Super Mario Bros. 3 is impossible. We've been playing it on the Virtual Console, and I never remembered a game being that hard. We play a lot of Wii over here. Mario Kart for Wii has really jumped up in our eyes. It gets more play than Halo. It gets more play than a lot of multiplayer games, just because it's an easy pick-up-and-go.

Have you ever been performing and had someone in the crowd hold up a sign that says "Dodongo dislikes Cody Rhodes"?
You know, what I've seen in the actual crowd is a sign that says, "Link wants his boots back." I have seen that one, and my boys always point it out to me like it's the funniest thing on Earth.

Anything else you want to tell us about your Zelda fandom?
I have an office in my new house; a woman put it together for me. It's a really classy, appropriate office. But [there are] two things on the wall behind the desk: one is the Hylian Shield, and one is a replica of the Master Sword.

DODONGO DISLIKES
CODY RHODES.
nWo

BORDERLANDS
NINTENDO DS
FIA II

EVENT

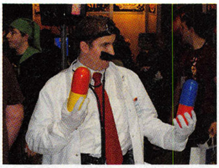
The Power of PAX

The 2009 event proves once again there's nothing quite like the Penny Arcade Expo.

For three days, Washington State Convention Center in Seattle was a gamer's paradise. PAX—the Penny Arcade Expo—gave thousands of people the chance to mill around the multisectioned show floor and expansive open gaming areas, and to wait in line to see one of the many gaming luminaries speak. It was amazing to see how much fun people were having; this show was definitely for the gamer, and no one else. People got first hands-on looks at upcoming games, and when they were done with that, they congregated in the gaming areas or just plopped down in bean-bag chairs and cracked open their DS systems. Everywhere you looked there was gaming going on, and it was awesome.

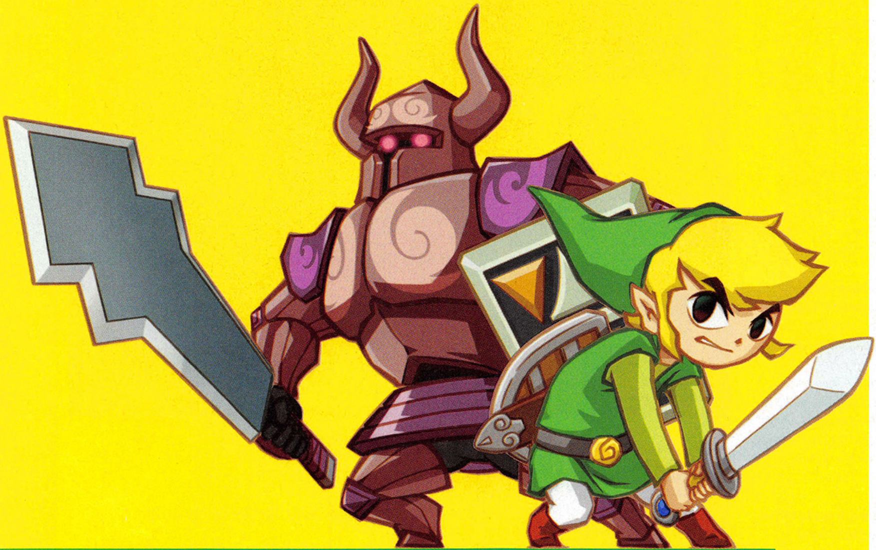
Amid the rows of demo displays, several games managed to get a ton of attention. Ubisoft's Just Dance was a blast to watch—four people were up on stage shakin' it while everyone cheered them on. That game is certain to be a party-pleaser. And even though Scribblenauts was just days away from launch, it drew a crowd like you'd imagine for a new Zelda game. New Super Mario Bros. Wii also got its fair share of attention, and everyone was walking away from its demo kiosks with huge smiles.

For gamers of all ages, PAX simply cannot be missed. It's a three-day, nonstop gaming party that gets better every year. **—CHRIS SH.**



Nintendo
Nintendo
NINTENDO DS

HARMONIX
THE BEATLES



HOLIDAY 2009 • VOL. 249

NEXT MONTH

It's the Nintendo DS game you've been waiting for: The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks! We'll take an in-depth look at what's guaranteed to be one of Link's grandest adventures ever. Speaking of the DS, we couldn't fit in our five-year tribute to the industry-redefining handheld this issue, but it'll be here next month, we promise! (Or else the NP staff goes to bed without supper.) Plus: Reviews of New Super Mario Bros. Wii, Rabbids Go Home, and more!

NINTENDO POWER (ISSN 1041-9551) is published 13 times a year, monthly plus Holiday issue following December issue. Future US, Inc., 4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. Phone: (650) 872-1642. Fax (650) 872-2207. Website: www.futureus.com. Periodicals postage paid in South San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by Time Warner Retail. Subscriptions: One year basic rate (12 issues: U.S.:$24.95. Canada: $29.95. Canadian price includes postage and GST (GST #R128220688). Subscriptions do not include newsstand only specials. **POSTMASTER**: Send changes of address to: Nintendo Power, PO Box 5770, Harlan, IA 51593-1270. Standard Mail Enclosure in the following edition: None. Ride-Along Enclosure: None. Canada Post PMA #40612608. Returns: Bleuchip International, PO Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2, Canada. Future US, Inc. also publishes Guitar World, Mac|Life, Maximum PC, PC Gamer, PlayStation: The Official Magazine, Pregnancy, Revolver, Windows: The Official Magazine, The Official Xbox Magazine and others.

Entire contents copyright 2009 Future US, Inc. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Reproduction on the Internet of the articles and pictures in this magazine is illegal without the prior written consent of Nintendo Power. Products named in the pages of Nintendo Power are trademarks of their respective companies. Future US, Inc. is not affiliated with the companies or products advertised or covered in Nintendo Power.

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Nintendo Power Customer Care, PO Box 5770, Harlan, IA 51593-1270. Phone: 1-866-941-8368. Web: www.nintendopower.com/customerservice. Email: nintendopower@cdsfulfillment.com. Back issues can be purchased by calling 1-800-865-7240. REPRINTS: Reprint Management Service. Phone: 717-399-1900 ext. 100.

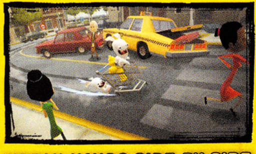
To The Moon or Bust!
Rabbids
Go Home
A Comedy Adventure™
TAXI

The Rabbids need stuff... LOTS OF STUFF!

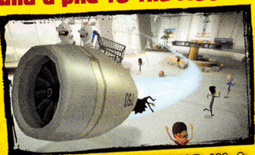
So grab EVERYTHING you can and help the Rabbids build a pile TO THE MOON!

NEW Customize your very own Rabbids.

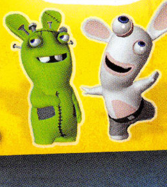
RABBIDS' 1ST COMEDY ADVENTURE



WREAK HAVOC SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH A FRIEND



TONS OF MISSIONS IN A WORLD FULL OF WACKINESS



EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Cartoon Violence
Crude Humor
Mild Language
Mild Suggestive Themes
Tobacco Reference

WWW.RABBIDS.COM

NINTENDO DS

Wii

UBISOFT

© 2009 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Rabbids Go Home, Ubisoft, Ubi.com, and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries. Wii and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY
THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH
Feisty Felines
Trapeze Triumph
Spherical Miracle
High-Wire Hijinks
Wii Balance Board sold separately with Wii Fit.
Compatible with Wii Balance Board
Sold separately
EVERYONE
E
Comic Mischief
ESRB CONTENT RATING
www.esrb.org
Wii
CAT DADDY
2K PLAY

Welcome to *The Greatest Show On Earth*™!

If you're ready to soar through the air as a human cannonball, perform with magnificent Bengal tigers, defy gravity on a motorcycle in the Spherical Miracle, dazzle the crowd with aerial acrobatics, clown around in a juggling jamboree and dance with an exotic Asian elephant... then you're ready for the fun and thrill that can only be experienced at *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey*™!

2kgames.com/2kplay

© 2009 Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. 2K Play, the 2K Play logo and Take-Two Interactive Software are all trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. Developed by Cat Daddy. Cat Daddy Games and the Cat Daddy Games logo are trademarks of Cat Daddy Games, LLC. © Feld Entertainment, Inc. RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY, THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH, CLOWN COLLEGE, CIRCUS CELEBRITY, ZING ZANG ZOOM, and BARNUM'S FUNUNDRUM are trademarks of and are under license from Ringling Bros.-Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows, Inc. All rights reserved. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All rights reserved.

RETROMAGS

Our goal is to preserve classic video game magazines so that they are not lost permanently.

People interested in helping out in any capacity, please visit us at www.retromags.com.

No profit is made from these scans, nor do we offer anything available from the publishers themselves.

If you come across anyone selling releases from this site, please do not support them and do let us know.

Thank you!